



EXCLUSIVE DEMO CD EVERY MONTH

TOMB RAIDER 2, ACE COMBAT 2, BROKEN SWORD 2, COLONY WARS, MACHINE HUNTER, YAROZE



Official UK

PlayStation Magazine

No. 26

SHE'S BACK...

**TOMB RAIDER 2 — EXCLUSIVE REVIEW
AND PLAYABLE DEMO**

REVIEWED:

TOMB RAIDER 2
COLONY WARS
CASTLEVANIA
OVERBOARD!
WING OVER
CLOCK TOWER
HERC'S ADVENTURES
MOTO RACER
AGENT ARMSTRONG
AIR RACE
FINAL FANTASY VII
FELONY 11-79
TETRIS PLUS
NHL '98
MADDEN '98
NAMCO MUSEUM VOLUME 5
BUBSY 3D

**THE OFFICIAL
WINTER PREVIEW**

*Your complete guide to every
game out this Christmas*

FINAL FANTASY VII
First UK review

The World's Best-Selling PlayStation Magazine

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SHOUTING, LARA! LARA! LARA!

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Start up

WHAT'S ON THIS MONTH'S CD?



Yes, everyone's favourite English heiress is back at last – and this month's disc has a playable demo of her latest action-packed adventure in *Tomb Raider 2*. Oh, and that's just for starters...

EXCLUSIVE DEMOS 9 & 2

PLAYABLE
TOMB RAIDER 2
Take up the cudgels and don't shillyshally. Lara's back for her second adventure.

PAL
PLAYABLE
ACE COMBAT 2
Namco's war in the skies returns. Are you the top gun?

PLAYABLE
BROKEN SWORD 2
Is this the greatest graphic adventure ever? You decide.

PLAYABLE
COLONY WARS
It's Star Wars in all but name.

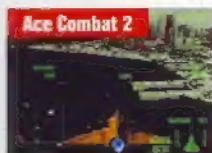
PLAYABLE
MACHINE HUNTER
Have a blast! It's Eidos' robotic shoot 'em up.

PLAYABLE
OVERBOARD!
Battle head to head in this two-player demo.

PLAYABLE VIDEO
YAROZE
Check out the video, then try out one of the games.

VIDEO
FINAL FANTASY VII
See SquareSoft's epic RPG.

PlayStation™



Tomb Raider 2 Playable

She's back and she's even more gorgeous than ever – with our exclusive demo you can find out just how good *TR2* really is...

Colony Wars Playable

Travel the galaxy, meet strange new people, and blast them to bits in Psygnosis' latest title.

Broken Sword 2 Playable

Graphic adventure excellence in the sequel to *Broken Sword*.

Ace Combat 2 Playable

Take to the sky with Namco's jaw-dropping sequel to *Air Combat*.

Machine Hunter Playable

Frantic blasting action as you save the human race from extinction.

Overboard! Playable

Experience the joys of two-player ship-to-ship fights to the death.

Yaroze Playable/video

Our first playable Yaroze demo, and more info about the system.

Final Fantasy VII Video

Prepare to be wowed by the most amazing PlayStation game ever.



We were all so busy trying to decide who should be the PlayStation's Sonic or Mario, we missed the most obvious

candidate. Could Crash Bandicoot be the mascot, the platform hero for our little grey PAL? Sure, the long-nosed marsupial fitted the bill. A little furry thing, kind of cute. The right credentials. And then Lara Croft breezed through the door. What a massive impact she's had. The PlayStation could not have asked for a more high-profile ambassador. When Lara's not adorning the cover of *The Face* or the Sunday supplements, she's walking into the sunset with Bono from U2.

Read about her latest adventure here first in our exclusive review. And while you're at it, try out the first level on the demo CD. What more could you ask for? Indeed, if Liam Gallagher were to describe this month's issue, he'd say it was 'double top'. Why? Because it's the first time we've handed out two maximum scores in one month. Scoot to the reviews section to discover your 'must buy' games.

The best issue and the finest demo CD yet. You lucky scamps...

Rob Pegley

Rob Pegley (Editor)

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BOUSTY 3D

THE OFFICIAL WINTER PREVIEW
your complete guide to every game out this christmas

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first uk review

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Spec Ops: US Army Rangers



Nagano Winter Olympics



World League Basketball

The Official UK PlayStation Magazine is dedicated to bringing its readers the most up-to-date information on all aspects of PlayStation gaming. Close links with Sony Computer Entertainment give us exclusive access to the very latest software and news, plus the coveted official demo CD which graces the magazine every month. Our game reviews are the most in-depth, honest and authoritative in the market, offering independent, unbiased buying advice. PSM: the biggest-selling videogames magazine in the UK.



Duke Nukem



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Tomb Raider 2



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We despatched our agents to the four corners of the earth. There was but one objective. Discover every game we'll be playing this Christmas and report back sharpish. Twelve pages of at-a-glance and concise information on all the games that will be on the shelves in the Yuletide season of goodwill. Don't buy a turkey. Don't get stuffed. You won't, now.



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You can run but you can't Hydra

An all-action adventure game featuring the voices of the stars,
clips from the film and, of course, you!



Disney's
ACTION GAME
FEATURING
HERCULES

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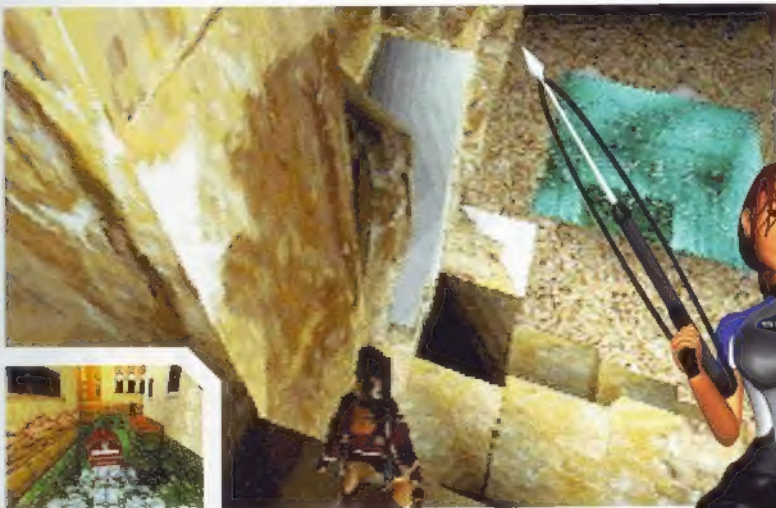
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Update

PLAYSTATION GAMES MARKET SET TO EXPLODE

The Christmas frenzy starts here...

Thanks to a new deal with Sony, neither of the *Tomb Raider* games or their main character, Lara Croft, will ever appear on Nintendo's N64 console.



Lara stays faithful to Sony

Lara Croft will never appear on the N64. Sony Computer Entertainment has set up an exclusive deal with Eidos which ensures that the lovely Lara will never appear on any other console, although PC versions of the game will continue to appear.

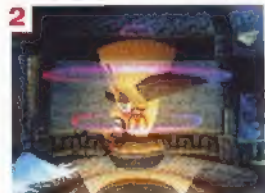
With *Tomb Raider 2* set for phenomenal sales this Christmas and the original *Tomb Raider* still selling well despite already having shifted over 1.5 million copies, Sony has moved to secure one of its greatest assets, just as Nintendo had been pursuing Core with a vengeance. The deal, which is set to run into the next century, means that no version of *Tomb Raider* and no other games including the Lara Croft character can appear anywhere other than the PlayStation or PC.

Not only are Sony very happy with the arrangement, but Eidos Interactive has also been very content to appear solely on the PlayStation. Mike McGarvey, the company's new chief operating officer, was quoted in *Computer Trade Weekly* as saying: 'We want our best-selling franchise to reach the greatest number of consumers, and the PlayStation satisfies this demand'.

It started with the release of *F1 '97*. Now, with *Tomb Raider 2*, the PlayStation games market is set to go absolutely crazy. Christmas traditionally (and unsurprisingly) features the highest sales of the year. This year, however, the market is likely to be hotter than ever, and record sales of both hardware and software are widely predicted. Already this issue there has been a huge influx of games, including the huge releases of *Tomb Raider 2* and *Final Fantasy VII* – both likely to figure in the Christmas top five. These follow the Psygnosis triple-A titles, *F1 '97* and *G-Police*, with *Colony Wars* also heading out of the Liverpool-based company's offices.

Next month Gremlin will enter the fray with *Judge Dredd* and *Actua Soccer 2*, while platform hits such as *Pandemonium 2* and *Crash Bandicoot 2* begin their yuletide sales push. Add *Broken Sword 2*, *Time Crisis*, *Fighting Force*, *Jersey Devil* and *FIFA '98: Road to World Cup*, and it's difficult to see where the money will be going with so many class titles in competition.

Here at *PSM* we've been trying to predict which games will top the charts this Christmas, but at present it is difficult to see beyond our cover game, *Tomb Raider 2*. As for the also-rans, *F1 '97*'s early release should exclude it, but expect *Final Fantasy VII*, *G-Police*, *Actua Soccer 2* and *Crash Bandicoot 2* to follow hot on Lara's heels. Whatever happens, it's going to be a great Christmas for gamers everywhere.



Final Fantasy VII (1) and *Crash Bandicoot 2* (2) will be duking it out with the likes of *Tomb Raider 2* and *G-Police* for the top spot this Christmas. The early release of *F1 '97* (3) may deny it the number one – but you never can tell.

For the more cultured among you who like a little contemporary dance mixed in with your gaming, we may have the perfect evening out. *Dance Tek Warriors* is a new production being taken on tour across the UK by the respected Union Dance Company.

Bringing together contemporary dance and martial arts, cutting-edge choreographers from New York and London have put together a show which *The Observer* described as

'urban poetry in motion'. And the whole thing was inspired by watching and playing *Tekken*.

'Fearless physicality' is the phrase that the company has used to describe the feeling they got from the game, and this is the theme continued throughout their routines. They go on: 'It shows the dancer as a warrior, balancing skill with vulnerability, fighting back against adversity to achieve a personal goal'.

If you fancy watching a live version of *Tekken*, then, the show started earlier this month with the first performances in Essex, and is set to travel right across the country through until February next year.

For more details on venues and dates contact Marie Clements on 0171 700 5346.

INDUSTRY TALK

NEW JOYPAD A REAL SHOCK

Sony to release Dual Shock pad in Japan



The current UK and US Analog Joypads (1) come without the vibration feature, but the twin frequencies of the Dual Shock should add a great deal to upcoming titles like *Tekken 3* (2) and *Grand Turismo* (3, 4).



We have learnt that Sony is planning to release a new version of the Analog Joypad in Japan. There has been controversy in this country recently, as the previous Japanese version of the Analog pad could create vibrations, a feature that was then removed from the US and European versions. The official reason for this was the limited vibration effect and the negligible feeling that it added to a game.

With the new Dual Shock pad, however, there are two types of vibrations available, with one at a high frequency and another at a much lower one. Although not a huge improvement, this will give a new dimension to many games, with the low frequency ideal for driving games and the high frequency much better for the high impact nature of fighting and shooting games.

Aside from the polarised nature of the frequency, everything remains virtually

unchanged, with rubber covers over the two thumb pads for improved grip the only cosmetic change.

The Dual Shock pad is due to be released in Japan on November 20, at a recommended retail price of 3300 yen (about £16.50), and is likely to be compatible with the same games that the existing Analog pad responds to. The changes, though, should add a whole new dimension to upcoming titles such as *Tekken 3* and *Grand Turismo*. We'll give you a full report on the pad as soon as we get hold of one to play with.



MELINDA MESSENGER HELPS LAUNCH F1 '97

Psygnosis racer smashes sales records

The *Formula 1 '97* launch took place with Melinda Messenger at the Virgin Megastore in London, last month, preceding the game's record-breaking first weekend.

Melinda was present doing whatever it is you do as a page 3 pin-up-turned-media celebrity, and we mention her only as an excuse to add a certain aesthetic value to the news piece. It is unlikely that her presence had anything to do with the fact that *F1 '97* went on to smash the record for the fastest-selling CD game ever, selling over five times more than the second place PlayStation game in the

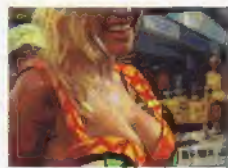
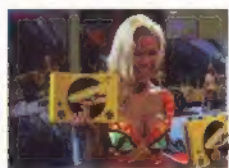
charts. Over 26,000 copies of *F1 '97* were sold in two days (not including Independent shop figures), compared to the 5,000 copies of *Oddworld: Abe's Odyssey* which were enough to put GT's innovative platformer in second place for the entire week.

Elsewhere in the Psygnosis empire, other stars were teaming up with the Liverpool publisher to promote another of its games, the brilliant *G-Police* (PSM25, 9/10). Casio has linked up with Psygnosis to produce a *G-Police* watch called the Casio G-Shock. The watch is said to already be a fashion item which adorns the wrists of Bono, Bjork, Damon Albarn, Jarvis

Cocker, the Spice Girls and, somewhat unbelievably, Jean-Paul Gaultier.

Such shock-proof watches are apparently extremely popular in Japan and the States and are just starting to break in this country. Only 400 of the *G-Police* watches will be made – the hope being that they will be collectors item of the future.

Psygnosis has yet to reveal whether these watches will be made available to the public in the future, but we'll keep you posted and pass on your interest to the company, should you be desperate for such wrist-jewellery.





“What are you waiting for?”

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LARA CROFT

“...Tomb Raider II renders everything else prosaic and dull.”

Official PlayStation Magazine

“We know what game you are really waiting for. We know the others are just filling time until its arrival.”

Play

“Lara Croft exploded onto the PC late last year... now reigns supreme as the undisputed queen of action gaming. More than two million sales later and countless awards, she's back...”

PC Gamer

“The most highly anticipated sequel of the year. It's all just too good to be true. This will be the best-selling game of 1997, book your copy now.”

PlayStation Power



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EIDOS
INTERACTIVE

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Aquatic alien plots, criminal-killing cars, the origins of *Mortal Kombat*'s most popular character, a challenger for *V-Rally*, and the return of Tony Crowther...



Leamington Spa: Having tamed the mighty beast that is Touring Car racing, Codemasters is about to take the ultimate step and challenge the mighty *V-Rally* with *Colin McRae's World Rally*. Foolish? The programmers don't think so. After only a few month's work, they reckon they'll be able get the game running faster than their rival by tweaking the graphic engine of *Touring Car*. *CMWR* will follow a season in the rally world championship, calling in at eight countries and trying out eight stages each time. Along the way there'll be the usual weather conditions, road surfaces and game styles. And if *Touring Car* is anything to go by, we should be on to a winner.



Sheffield: Years ago, when you could program a whole game using 16k and the top titles were based on a potty pigeon, there emerged a talented young programmer called Tony Crowther. Now, having had his fill of PC games, he's turned his highly regarded attention to the PlayStation, with Gremlin's mad blaster *Nzo*. Playing like the bastard son of *Tempest X* and *Nanotech Warrior*, the game puts you in control of a space craft as it travels down 3D tunnels frantically shooting everything in sight. By the time it's complete it will include two-player action, power-ups and a blistering trance soundtrack. Don't go near it with a hangover, though...



Slough: It is the future (again) – 2115 to be exact – and the world is plagued by crime syndicates fighting for one thing. Yes, you guessed it... world domination. As the Elite Protectorate's best pilot, it falls on you to climb into the DeathCar and bring the crims to justice by any means you feel necessary. So begins Interplay's latest game, *Crime Killer*. Unlike a lot of other driving games, *Crime Killer* gives you complete freedom to roam the cities, wastelands and ghettos while you track down the felons. Once discovered, there's only one sentence – death. Each vehicle is fitted with a special camera so you can watch your executions in delightfully slow motion or have another look at some of the stunts you pulled during your pursuit. *Crime Killer* is due for release early next year.



London: Ever since the first bloodstained fist smacked into the face of a helpless opponent, the *Mortal Kombat* games have been incredibly popular with gamers looking for a brutal fistfight. Now Midway have decided to base a whole new game on Sub Zero, the blue ninja bloke below, charting just how he arrived at the first *MK* tournament. Instead of a straight beat 'em up, *MK Mythologies* is a hybrid of platform game and fighter, not unlike the classic *Kung Fu Master*. *MK Mythologies* will be released in the new year.



London: It is the future (isn't it always?) and scientists have uncovered a collection of alien pods dotted around the planet in GT's *Critical Depth*. It's your job to find them before they trigger a chain reaction and rip the world apart. This sounds tricky enough, but move the action underwater and you get an, ahem, whole new kettle of fish. To guide you through this nautical nightmare, developers Singletrac have given the gamer a wide range of craft to control, from the old but reliable Ruskie sub to the CIA's latest project. As well as the mission-based levels in this search-and-destroy thriller, you can play *Critical Depth* with friends using a mass of multi-player options. We'll be ordering the GT folk to the office soon so we can find out more details for you.



TOTAL DRIVIN



THE LIFE HE ONCE KNEW FLASHED BEFORE HIS EYES

ALL BETS ARE OFF



ocean

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UNITED STATES COLUMN

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This month the US puts its own slant on the RPG with *Diablo* and *Youngblood*, and the arguments over lack of vibration in the US Analog pad continue to reverberate...

Already a smash hit on the PC, Blizzard's *Diablo* RPG will find its way to the PlayStation early next year.



American-produced real-time RPGs like *Diablo* and *Youngblood* are leading the genre's renaissance in the West. While the likes of Japan's Square and Enix have shown the way, US companies and their European cohorts are now adding their own cultural influences.

Blizzard's *Diablo* was a massive hit on the PC earlier this year, in part because it lent itself well to on-line play, but also because it was great fun in its own right. Two years ago we thought of a console conversion of this game would have raised eyebrows, but among those companies hell bent on bringing their 'franchises' across every medium and electronic device imaginable, the roaring sales of *Final Fantasy VII* muted but still relevant success of games like *Command & Conquer* and *Star Wars* have signaled Sony's intention to make the PlayStation's genre base. The PlayStation version of *Diablo* is being developed by Cmax, on behalf of Electronic Arts. So far it looks a lot like the PC version, with a range of added extras. Already the new characters, the figures look chunkier and more, well, PlayStation, and light-sourcing has been improved, adding greatly to the game's atmosphere. Anyone familiar with Blizzard's work will come in *Diablo* — like *Warcraft 2*, it's a complex game, but surprisingly simple to play and very addictive. Players choose a character to play, and must defeat a variety of evil baddies, gradually learning skills and gaining better weapons, spells, and armor. *Diablo* is due for its US launch some time in the early spring. *Youngblood*, from GT Interactive, is like *Diablo* in that it's a top-down isometric affair, but the combat. The major differences are in the style and tone — as opposed to the dark, gritty *Diablo*, *Youngblood* is based on the comic book of the same name.

The game promises to feature all the major characters from the comics, as well as levels ranging from deep and dark jungles to dry and desolate deserts. Like *Diablo*, you'll also get the chance to travel to the pits of Hell.

Players will be able to pick and choose characters to create a team of four, and the combinations selected will have a huge effect on the gameplay. Some characters are dating each other, while some can't stand one or more of the others, and so on. Unless your team works well together you're gonna end up in trouble when it comes to beating up the bad guys. It's a bit like organizing a big night out on the town for all your friends...

Despite a healthy and rigorous home-grown development community, though, the US market is still snapping up foreign success stories. It was assumed that Ocean's US office would publish the much anticipated *V-Rally* in America. EA's massive muscle has evidently won the day, however, and the game will be entitled *Need For Speed - V-Rally* in the US.

EA will, no doubt be opening its hefty cheque book for the TV companies as well. Watching the box in the US is getting to be like watching PlayStation preview video. First there was the massive *FFVII* advertising campaign, and now just about everything else is plying the airwaves. One tit to be sure to win attention is already notorious *Duke Nukem*. Its campaign — based on dodgy '70s exploitation flicks — is bound to upset someone, and therefore shift a few thousand extra units.

The game itself is coming along a treat. There are those extra levels already mentioned in this column, which parody certain other PlayStation games, and we hear that the infamous stripper level is being left well alone. *Duke Nukem: Total Meltdown* is due out right at the end of this year.

Finally, the ongoing saga of the vibrating joypad. Due (allegedly) to fears of a lawsuit from fellow vibrator-peddler Nintendo, Sony's smart new Analog Joypad was launched in the US without any vibrating element. Now all that



Youngblood promises comics-inspired carnage and ridiculously large guns, together with complex inter-character relationships and strategic gameplay.



nonsense has been forgotten, it seems, and a new pad, the Dual Shock, is due to be introduced soon. This pad features not one but two pitches of vibrations, which work simultaneously to give you that all-important extra shake when you hit an obstacle or blow an enemy to smithereens.

Finally (honest), anyone who has had enough of Nintendo 64 owners using the rental charts as an excuse for blowing off about one system being better than another got a nice surprise last month. *Final Fantasy VII* raced into the rental charts, becoming the first PlayStation game to do so since the N64's launch. Analysts believe many players wanted to try the game out before they bought an RPG for the first time. Nintendo's dominance of this particular chart is usually put down to the high price of carts and therefore the good sense in renting first.



US gamers are finally going to get their hands on a vibrating pad. But what about us in Europe?



The PlayStation conversion of *Duke Nukem* is looking good, and will feature several completely new areas, as well as the original's infamous 'stripper' level.

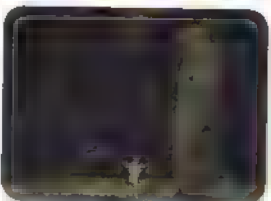
LOADING

22% COMPLETE

America: With the recent success of RPGs on the PlayStation, cash-hungry publishing companies are now frantically scrabbling through their PC back-catalogues looking for conversion candidates. One such is *Diablo*, a fantasy RPG from *Warcraft 2*-purveyor Blizzard Entertainment. The idea is to protect a village from evil while admiring some decidedly swanky 3D graphics. Despite being a PC conversion, Blizzard have included a bundle of PlayStation-only features, including brand-new levels, a cool new control config, plus a single-screen, two-player battle option. Expect much pillaging and monsters with too many consonants in their name in early 1998.



California: According to Shiny Entertainment's *Messiah*, our planet is protected from the agents of darkness by seven arcane seals. Unfortunately, Hell is in the mood for a scrap and has dispatched an emissary to destroy the seals and launch the apocalypse a few aeons earlier than planned. Naturally, God's not exactly chuffed about this and has sent down a 'vessel for the holy light' (ie you) to thwart the bad guys and make sure those seals remain in place. In an example of Shiny's sense of humour, *Messiah*'s main character isn't a macho fighter or a saucy siren but a half-pint cherub who floats around, possessing people. It's still early on, but with the cherub formed from over 180,000 polygons(!), *Messiah* threatens to be absolutely jaw-dropping.



America: If you're planning a trip to the States in the near future, we humbly recommend a trawl of the newsstands to find the latest US PlayStation mag – the *Official US PlayStation Magazine*. Published much along the same lines as the fine periodical you hold in your hands, plans include to include a cover-mounted CD every month as well as the usual in-depth features, news, previews and reviews. A bargain? Kind of – the CD will work just dandy on Johnny Yank's PlayStation but is totally incompatible with the UK machine. Bummer, dude etc...

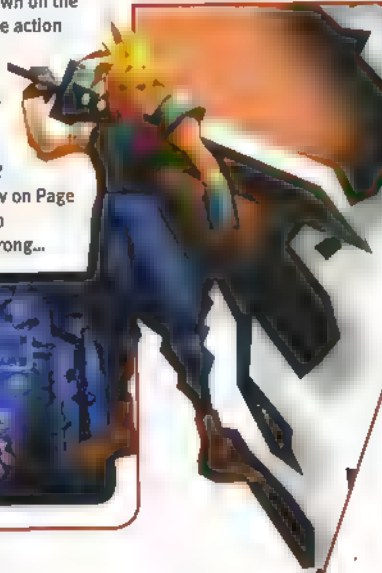


The World of PlayStation

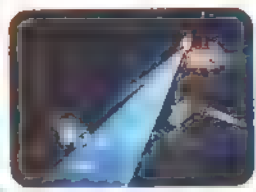
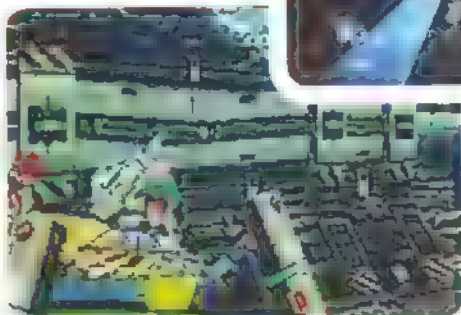
Final Fantasy VII fever hits the world, prompting an RPG revival, Shiny gets all apocalyptic, and Square continues to develop even more top games..

Japan: Having shifted a staggering five million copies of *Final Fantasy VII* in Japan alone, Squaresoft is now publishing a special collector's version of the game – *Final Fantasy VII International* – to be released in Japan only. Using a pocket-emptying four(!) discs, *FFVII Int'l* has the usual three game discs plus a special fourth CD containing a digital play guide, map explanations and a 'making of' film.

Squaresoft has had to make a few adjustments to tailor *FFVII* to the UK market. That meant cutting down on the amounts of battles (making the action 'less random', they claim) but fear not – the UK version boasts more than a few extras – such as a couple of extra bosses – to make up for it. What's the game actually like? Check out our exclusive review on Page 118, and remember: \$5,000,000 Japanese RPG fans can't be wrong...



Japan: With Squaresoft grabbing headlines around the globe with the phenomenal *Final Fantasy VII*, it's easy to forget that the company's got a few other games up its rather stuffed sleeves. Alongside *Front Mission* and *Final Fantasy Tactics*, the Japanese überdeveloper is also working on the Teutonic-sounding *Einhandler*. A side-scrolling shooter, the player controls a curious assault craft/mobile crane hybrid – the enigmatically-monikered Endymion FRS MK.II. Replete with a handy anti-grav device for picking up both speed and mobility boosts, it's a hulking great swine of a killing machine blessed with graphics from the gods. See whether you agree when *Einhandler* arrives in the UK early next year.



FOREIGN COVERAGE

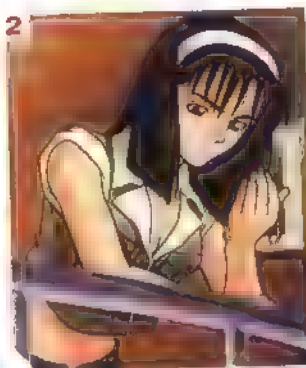


JAPAN COLUMN

39 40N 140 30E

This month *Bust A Move* is released (not to be confused with *Bust-A-Move 2*), reports from the 35th Amusement Machine Show, and the announcement of *Tekken* the movie...

[1] *Rival Schools United By Fate*, from Capcom. [2] The *Tekken* movie is on its way. [3] Dancing action in *Bust A Move*, from ENIX. [4] Horror roleplaying in *Baroque*.



The normal course of events in Japan is for a successful Manga film to be made into a game. In the case of *Tekken*, however, this trend is to be reversed. Namco has entrusted Sony Music Entertainment with the task of creating the anime films of the game. In co-operation with ASCII and OAV. The series is to be based on *Tekken* and *Tekken 2*, with some of the *Tekken 3* story. Two films are being planned, the first to be released in November and the second one in January 1998. The PlayStation version of *Tekken 3* is likely to be released in Japan between the two films.

Back on the games front, *Baroque* is a traditional RPG with a horror theme. Players roam around polygonal corridors encountering characters, puzzles, and monsters, all tied up in a chilling Gothic scenario. Certainly one to keep an eye on, from early reports.

Not to be confused with the puzzley *Bust A-Move 2*, *Bust A Move* will be one of the first *PaRappa* clones to hit Japan. Players will have to select one of 12 characters, each associated with a particular style of music. By performing the best dance routines (combining speed, rhythm and technique) you progress through the game. A refreshing and surprising title from ENIX (better known for RPGs such as *Dragon Quest VII*). It seems that *PaRappa* may have created a monster of a genre.

Meanwhile, the 35th Amusement Machine Show took place in Tokyo, recently, with some 569 videogame arcade machines on display.

At the Konami stand, the new *Cobra* was surely the most eagerly awaited systems board of the show. Konami failed to capitalise on the interest, though, with hardly any

evidence of *Cobra* games. An almost finished version of *Fighting Wushu* was their best offering, with its fluid animation and a level of detail superior to even *Tekken 3*. The game system isn't quite as good as other fighting games, but as Konami's first 3D beat 'em up, it showed much promise. Also displayed was *Racing JAM* on the old Hornet board. The game looked very good, though, and a PlayStation version is almost certainly on the cards.

Namco was promoting *Motocross Gol*, an off-road bike game running on their System 23 board. Although graphically little different to System Super 22 titles, it's an excellent game that's sure to be a hit in the arcades. With the relative lack of motorbike games on the PlayStation, a conversion is likely.

Rapid River, on the other hand, involves the player rowing down a fast-moving river in a rubber boat. To make the boat move the player must paddle furiously, with features such as braking by paddling in reverse adding to the realism. Different stages see the player flowing through Volcano Land, Glacier Land, Dinosaur Land and The Big Canyon, to name a few. A lot of excitement surrounds this original game.

Arcade giant Capcom was not to be outdone, though. Faithful to tradition, the company introduced two more *Street Fighter* sequels, of which *Pocket Fighter* is the most

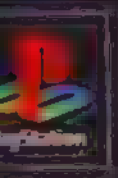
interesting and original. *Pocket Fighter* is aimed at a younger audience, with very simple gameplay involving only three buttons, and features 10 comical characters from a variety of previous games. Possibly the most original feature is 'Cosplay', standing for 'Costume Play', based on the Japanese trend of wearing the costume of a person's favourite Manga or videogame character. In *Pocket Fighter* each character will be able to change their costume, which changes the combos available in the fights. In addition, winning bouts earns the character gems, which can then be spent to improve special moves. With its humorous combos and funny storyline, *Pocket Fighter* is not really a *Street Fighter* sequel but more of an original game bearing a well-respected branding. Expect a PlayStation conversion to follow very soon.

Capcom also introduced a very original polygon fighting game called *Rival Schools United By Fate* (as snappy as ever). This introduces some original Capcom characters, fighting in a Japanese environment with more than a hint of Manga. The player represents his own school and fights against other high school teams in an interesting take on the beat 'em up. There are five different teams with three different characters each, all with different endings and scenarios depending on who takes part and how well you control them. *Rival Schools* will rely partly on *X-Men VS Street-Fighter*'s game engine with its gauge system, and uses four buttons. Judging by the queues in front of the machine, Capcom seems to have come up with yet another winning beat 'em up formula.

Despite a few interesting games, though, there was an unhappy lack of originality and creativity on display at the show. Sequels abounded everywhere, and very little real innovation was to be seen. Only Namco demonstrated its versatility with *Rapid River* and *Motocross Gol*, and it remains the leading name in arcade gaming as well as PlayStation software.



[1] Capcom's quirky *Pocket Fighter* features simple gameplay and some neat ideas. [2] Yes, it's the first arcade rowing machine - *Rapid River* from Namco.



KILL ONE TO WARR A HUNDRED

三國無雙

KOEI

三國無雙
OFF THE DRAGON

FIGHTING GAME HISTORY IS ABOUT TO BE RE-WITTEN



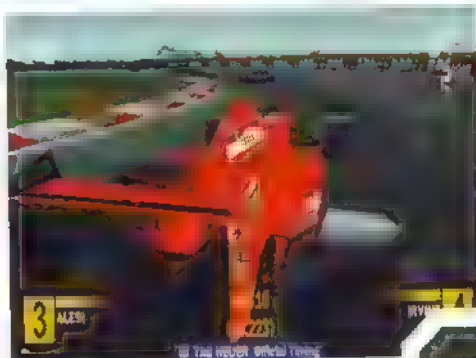
THE STATE OF THE 'STATION

Hardware and software sales outstrip rivals

Even the most devout Sega or Nintendo fan wouldn't dispute that the last six months have been incredibly successful for Sony. The much vaunted price drop, prompted by the release of the Nintendo 64, worked even better than Sony could have wished for, with the grey console flying off the shelves and many shops running out of stock.

Speaking to Steve Slater at Game in Meadowhall, Sheffield, we asked him how the PlayStation market now compared with earlier in the year. 'We're selling more machines than we ever did. If you take an average week we sell 30 PlayStations, 10 N64's and perhaps two Saturns... since May we've sold more than 450 PlayStations. Once the price was dropped things went crazy.'

The same can be said for software. The Game shop in Meadowhall, the company's third biggest outlet, averages between 600 or 700 software sales a week with big titles like *F1 '97* and *Red Alert* quite capable of adding another 100 games each week. A quick look at



the all-format chart sees five PlayStation games in Top 10, with *F1 '97* selling an astonishing, and record breaking, 26,000 in its first weekend of sales.

If you add to the equation some truly triple-A titles such as *Final Fantasy VII* and *Tomb Raider 2* this autumn then, as the Irish dance combo D-Team once said, things can only get better...

Top titles like *F1 '97* and the upcoming *Red Alert* are keeping PlayStation sales high across the country.



Top 20

The Gallup top 20 of PlayStation games on sale now. With last month's placings in brackets.

OUT THIS MONTH

THE LATEST PLAYSTATION RELEASES

October

Although it's been a fairly busy summer by traditional standards, nothing can compare to the pre-Christmas period as companies get ready to wheel out their big guns. The first triple-A game of the season was released when Psygnosis delivered their top spot certainty, *F1 '97*, to an expectant public. Geoff Knox, manager of 101 Computer Games in Luton, said it has sold incredibly well: 'We had loads of pre-orders and we're selling a few copies every day.' The other two big sellers of the month have been *Oddworld* and *Actua Golf 2*. Geoff added: 'It's amazing how popular golf games become when there's a big tournament on the TV.'

With such big titles released this month, some games were going to lose out. Surprisingly, though, it's been the likes of *PaRappa and Nuclear Strike* that have taken a lot of time to pick up. But then, what do you expect when you go up against *F1 '97* on its opening weekend? One surprise of the month was the performance of *V-Rally*. After three months

of sale you'd expect people to be trading them in by now, but so far Geoff hasn't had any secondhand copies offered to him. Seems there's a lot of life in the old dog yet.

On sale now

Information supplied by 101 Computer Games, Luton

<i>G-Police</i>	Psygnosis	PSM25	9/10
<i>Agent Armstrong</i>	Virgin	PSM26	7/10
<i>Ballblazer Championship</i>	Virgin	PSM23	5/10
<i>Tetris Plus</i>	JVC	PSM26	6/10
<i>Total Drivin'</i>	Ocean	PSM25	8/10
<i>Kurushi</i>	SCEE	PSM24	8/10
<i>Croc</i>	Electronic Arts	PSM25	7/10
<i>Ridge Racer Revolution</i>	SCEE	PSM6	8/10
<i>Nightmare Creatures</i>	SCEE	PSM25	6/10
<i>Moto Racer</i>	Electronic Arts	PSM26	8/10

PlayStation RECOMMENDS



G-Police (PSM25 - 9/10)

Psygnosis' latest hit, *G-Police*, puts you firmly in the hot seat of a Havoc assault helicopter as you patrol the domed cities of Calisto. The Havoc is a dream to control as you fly round the city, upholding the law or just blasting hell out of everything you see in the 35 levels.



Street Fighter EX (PSM25 - 9/10)

After years of 2D arcade domination, Capcom finally takes its classic fighting series into the third dimension resulting in probably the best fighting game of the year. *Street Fighter EX Alpha Plus*. A wonderful game has just been made better. Simply brilliant.



Total Drivin' (PSM25 - 8/10)

As the title implies, Ocean's latest racer covers everything from rally driving through the Scottish hills to harrying round the streets of Hong Kong in an ultra-fast Indy car. Whatever type of racing you're into, there'll be something for you. Bloomin' marvellous.



Wipeout 2097 (PSM12 - 9/10)

For adrenaline junkies, there's still nothing quite like *Wipeout 2097*. Eight tracks, four teams, and loads of power-ups make for probably the best racing/shooting combo we've ever seen. Newly released on the Platinum label, at just under £20 it's a required purchase.

ChartTrack

IT'S TENNIS, PETE, BUT
NOT AS YOU KNOW IT.

TENNIS

Arena



The hottest, maddest
sporting battle of sexes,
the score is far from love. Take on...
...the spiciest of chicks as you serve for your life.



Ubisoft



GUN OF THE MONTH: THE G-CON 45

NOW WE'LL SEE HOW ACCURATE YOU ARE:
PIXEL PERFECT TARGETING

YOU'LL NEVER BE CORNERED AGAIN:
LEFT & RIGHT HAND GRIP

EXTRA LONG CABLE FOR EXTRA
LONG RANGE COMBAT

The G-CON 45™ is the professionals c

namco®

G-CON 45™ is also compatible with "Point C

Time Crisis™ & © 1995 1996 NAMCO LTD., G-CON 45™ & © 1996 NAMCO LTD. and Point Blank & © 1994 1997 NAMCO LTD., All Rights Reserved

BLOW THE OPPOSITION AWAY...
LARGE CALIBRE BARREL

THERE WILL BE NO ESCAPE!
SIDE BUTTONS FOR INTERACTIVE GAME PLAY

HIGHLY RESPONSIVE TRIGGER MECHANISM:
REMEMBER: NO SAFETY CATCH

ce. Only available with Time Crisis.TM

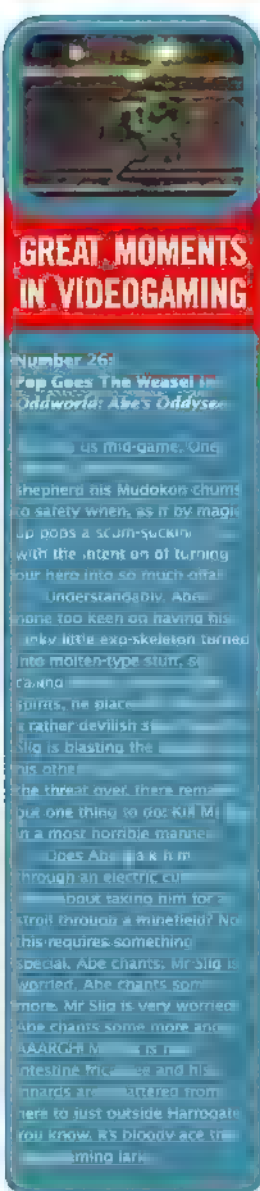
Game from Namco, early 1998.

© 1998 Namco Ltd. "PS" and "PlayStation" are trademarks of Sony Computer Entertainment Inc. Price £59.99.



ON THE ROAD TO SUCCESS

The ultimate racing experience?



GREAT MOMENTS IN VIDEOGAMING

Number 26:

Pop Goes The Weasel in
Oddworld: Abe's Oddysee

us mid-game. One shepherd his Mudokon chums to safety when, as it by magic, up pops a scum-sucking with the intent on of turning our hero into so much offal. Understandably, Abe, none too keen on having hisinky little exo-skeleton turned into molten-type stunt, is cackling spirits, he place a rather devilish s... Slig is blasting the his other the threat over, there remain one thing to do: KILL ME in a most horrible manner. Does Abe blink him through an electric cut about taking him for a stroll through a minefield? No, this requires something special. Abe chants: Mr Slig is worried. Abe chants some more. Mr Slig is very worried! Abe chants some more and... AAARGH! Mr Slig is... testine fracture and his... chards are... altered from here to just outside Harrogate (you know, it's bloody ace, isn't it...)... ming lani.

G ranted, yer PlayStation joypad is just dandy for pummelling the bejabbers out of RoboNazis and the like, but when it comes to racing games there's nowt better than clamping your hands around a nice, solid steering wheel while your feet go into hyperactive mode on the pedals.

Enter Top Gear — the swanky new steering wheel from peripherals boffins, Logic 3. Engineered to outlast even the most fervent driving freak, each steering wheel comes complete with a sturdy accelerator, gear stick, brake pedals for the more faint hearted, plus nine programmable buttons to tailor the wheel to your individual requirements. Those Sunday drivers with a Saturn or a N64 will be chuffed to hear Top Gear works equally well on all three systems.

In a quick test drive the contraption took a fair bit of getting used to, but once sussed, Top Gear gave the likes of *Total Drivin'* a whole new edge. There'll be a more detailed review in next month's peripheral round up, but for those anxious to spend £70 on this rather luxurious accessory, give Logic 3 a bell on 0181 902 2211.



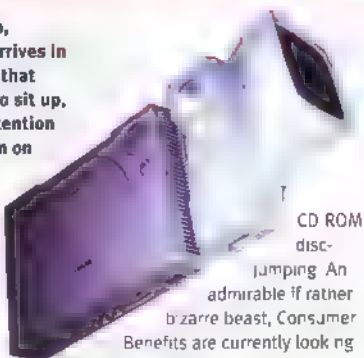
Complete with its foot pedals, the Top Gear steering wheel from Logic 3 adds a whole new dimension of enjoyment to racing games from *F1 '97* to *Wipeout 2097*.



THE SECOND ICE AGE

Kick back and let your PlayStation chill

E very so often, something arrives in PSM Towers that causes one to sit up, pay close attention and laugh like a gibbon on helium. This month's messenger of mirth was Consumer Benefits' press release for Game Ice. Boasting an 'incredible pump power' (?) of 45 cubic feet per minute, the device is basically an add-on fan designed to keep your PlayStation cool. By using a rather fancy filter to stop dust getting near the processors, it should end that scourge of



CD ROM disc...

jumping. An admirable if rather bizarre beast, Consumer Benefits are currently looking for a UK distributor. If they're successful we'll let you know, but as the Game Ice looks like a cross between Dr Who's K9 and a Dyson vacuum cleaner, we don't suggest you hold your breath...



MUSIC SHOW

It's a sonic extravaganza...

B y the time you read this, there'll only be a month left until The National Music Show — the UK's biggest public music show.

Taking place at Wembley Conference Centre from 28-30 November, the weekend will feature competitions, interviews and live performances from such young hipsters as The

Yardbirds, The Animals and Dr Feelgood. The highlight of the show will be a collection of Beatles memorabilia commemorating the 30th Anniversary of the Sgt Pepper's album, with John Lennon's piano plus original equipment used for recording the album. Tickets cost £6 for adults (£2.50 for children). For details, call the hotline on 01369 708007.



THIS MONTH IN POWER

not to mention *Essential* and *GamesMaster*...

R ead PSM's exclusive review of *Tomb Raider* yet? You have? Going to buy the game, then? So why the hell haven't you picked up the latest *PlayStation Power*, with its FIVE! QUID! OFF! voucher for every reader. If that's not enough, how about an exclusive review of *Resident Evil: Director's Cut* and a 20-minute demo of the sequel, plus first reviews of *Time Crisis*, *Fighting Force* and *MDK2* Top stuff.

On the off-chance that more magazine-style excitement is required, pick up the latest *GamesMaster* and enjoy the free 30-minute video showcasing the best winter games from Sony, Konami, Acclaim and those lords of darkness (only kidding there), Nintendo.

Finally there's the fifth issue of *Essential PlayStation*. Complete with an in-depth look at girls in games, the adventure genre, and a disc crammed with demos for the likes of *Rage Racer*, *Exhumed* and *Pandemonium*, *Essential PlayStation* is a fine, nay essential beast indeed.



It's another great month for magazines — go check out *PlayStation Power*, *GamesMaster* and, last but not least, *Essential PlayStation*.

ELECTRONIC ARTS

It's a deadly road to salvation.

AUTO DESTRUCT

Use strategy and driving skill to defeat the Disciples of Lazarus on mission
after mission of car-to-car combat.

MENTAL KOMBAT

The two gentlemen pictured on your right work in the Public Relations department at Psygnosis. It's not beyond the realms of possibility that the photographs have, in some ways, been 'doctored'. But we can guarantee that they have not been granted any favours when it comes to Mental Kombat...



Name: Glen O'Connell Job: PR manager Stuff: Gary's boss used to be known as Mr Wipeout 2007 but now feels like G-Police has taken its man in. A big fan of dance music and regular visitor to Cream, Glen has never had a mousie ache or curly perm.



Name: Gary Nicholson Job: PR executive Stuff: Loves Final Fantasy VI - which is 'amazing', and Colony Wars, of course. Supports Liverpool although doesn't like football much. Free y adm ts - hat not au. Scousers are funny.

We predict...

...that next month's top 50 selling games will look like this. What do you reckon? If you can get any closer to the final 50 than this, with your guess, then we'll send you whichever game is at number one. Answers on a postcard to the usual address, labelled 'Top 50'.

1. (3) *Albe's Onlysee*
2. (3) *Albe's Onlysee*
3. (3) *Albe's Onlysee*
4. (NE) *G-Police*
5. (3) *V-Rally*
6. (3) *V-Rally*
7. (3) *V-Rally*
8. (NE) *Total Drivin'*
9. (3) *Int'l Track & Field*

QUESTIONS	GLEN	GARY
1. What is the lead character in <i>Fade To Black</i> called?	Conrad B Hart	1/1 Bob Monkhouse?
2. Where is Kalisto based?	France	1/1 France
3. Spell Kurushi.	K-u-r-u-s-h-i	1/1 K-u-r-u-s-h-i
4. How many games are planned in the <i>Oddworld</i> series?	Three	0/1 Three
5. Who is currently the 'real' Lara Croft?	Don't know	0/1 Ginger Spice?
6. Who is publishing <i>Buggy</i> ?	Don't know	0/1 Gremlin
7. What colour is Jersey Devil?	Purple	1/1 Red
8. How much is the <i>Power Source</i> disc?	£9.99	0/1 £4.99
9. What is the name of Rachel's psycho husband in <i>Brookside</i> ?	Don't watch it	-1/1 Christian
10. <i>G-Police</i> or <i>Colony Wars</i> - which is best?	<i>G-Police</i> , of course	1/1 <i>Colony Wars</i>

VERDICT

4. Poor effort from the man who promotes the game known in Liverpool as the *G-Busies*.

5. Half marks for the PR understudy, but eh, calm down, calm down, it's not bad.

QuizStation



Of course you can do far better than any Scouse space cadets. And you don't have to be a rocket scientist to attempt our QuizStation. So just answer our six questions listed opposite and post them to the earthly address below. Prizes which are out of this world could be winging their way to you shortly.

Answers on a POSTCARD to:

QuizStation 26, Official UK PlayStation Magazine, 30 Monmouth Street, Bath BA1 2BW. Entries to us by November 26.

The questions

- 1) What is the name of *Space*'s debut album?
- 2) Who is Luke Skywalker's dad?
- 3) What is the cubic space of a telephone box?
- 4) Name two of the stars of *Spaceballs*.
- 5) How old is the moon?
- 6) Who was the *Urban Spaceman*?

Answers to Mental Kombat
1) Conrad B Hart, 2) France, 3) K-u-r-u-s-h-i, 4) Three, 5) Gremlin, 6) Gremlin, 7) Red, 8) £4.99, 9) Simon, 10) *G-Police* or *Colony Wars* 2/10 PSM26

Are you hard enough?



"Fighting Force epitomises the fun of great console games...
You have no excuse not to play Fighting Force and
I suggest that you do so as soon as possible."

Total Entertainment

"A beat-'em-up that doesn't include contestants dressed-up in stupid costumes
hurling unconvincing fireballs at one another in a lame-looking arena?"

You'd better believe it!"

PlayStation Pro 9.1 0



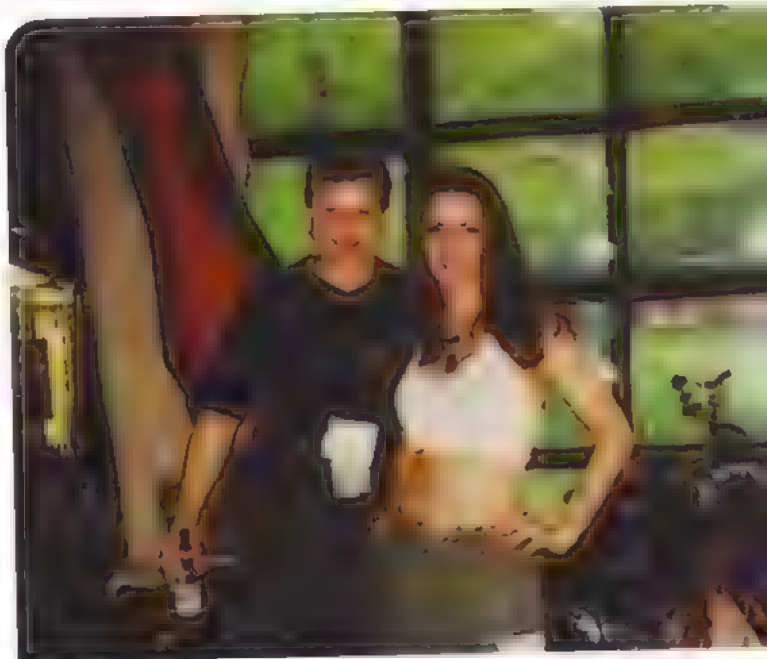
**PC
CD**

EIDOS

I awake with a deep sense of foreboding, partly because I'm expecting a group of German journalists to visit DMA that day at very short notice, but also because I'm always unsure of what to do in these circumstances.

Should I try to find my clothes and slip out? Wake her up, have a cup of coffee before parting as friends? Or throw back the covers and demand she makes me breakfast and tidies up a bit before she goes? These sort of questions become depressingly familiar if you're a high-flying PR manager for Europe's best-loved and most widely respected software house. Fortunately I'm just a git at DMA Design, so that's something - waste too much time worrying about it.

I arrive at work and check my e-mail for information on requests, messages, job offers, threats and gossip. I spend about two hours answering requests for information on DMA and our games from magazines, web sites and various crazy people. Today there's a message from a German TV producer who wants to use some game footage in a video he's producing for a European techno outfit. I have nine calls from journalists in America which I'll answer tonight, once the west coast wakes up.



'Making visiting journalists happy is an art form...': DMA Design's head of Propaganda, Mr Brian Baglow.

WORK, REST, AND PLAYSTATION

ON THE JOB

Journalists stopped giving me their home phone number when I started calling them at 3am and sticking their details on the newsgroup a.i.t.games.obsessive.stalker.

I phone one features editor on a well-known lifestyle mag about a photo shoot featuring semi-naked chicks sipping over the bosses' cars. Lord, I love my job. Time to start setting things up for our German guests...

Making visiting journalists happy is an art form. Too many companies rely on the take-them-out-and-get-them-pissed-let's-send-them-a-tamagotchi-for-a-laugh approach. This is the lazy PR way to work. It doesn't work for two reasons - one, the hangover the following morning destroys any good feeling that was cultivated the previous day and two, the next time that journalist visits you, he/she will expect MORE. Three or four visits and you find yourself in some back alley trying to round up drugs and loose women. You can get yourself arrested on a misunderstanding, and before you know it, you're out of a job, facing 18 years in the nick and the game still only gets 65 per cent. Trust me - it's not worth it.

I make sure that each team due to meet the visitors understands they'd better be damn cheerful for the occasion. Enthusiasm and commitment are essential. Anyone caught looking miserable or whistling the theme tune to *The Great Escape* has to wear the lemming

Brian Baglow has the title 'Propaganda and Indoctrination' on his business cards. He thinks plying 'bloody journalists' with drink is lazy PR but, lucky for us, he does it anyway. This is the man who will be fighting off the tabloid hacks desperate for a seedy *Grand Theft Auto* story. So we go in there first...

suit for the next visiting journalist. Demo machines are set up, levels are tested, coffee made. We wait and play *Grand Theft Auto*. Lose badly. But I am playing against the guys who designed the actual cities.

Being a consummate professional, I go to meet the journos at the airport. The flight is late, as usual, so I order the customary vile combination from the vending machine. Finally the flight's announced and I plaster on my best fake smile and crack my knuckles in preparation for a round of firm and friendly handshakes.

From then on it's pretty much constant pandemonium. Taxis to the hotel. Check in. Back in the cabs and down to DMA HQ. We take the lift down to sub-level four - GTA. Russell Kay, from Visual Sciences, who are doing the *GTA* PlayStation version, brings along the first ever gold master disc for the PlayStation. It looks superb and plays even

better. Yahoo! The trick now is to make sure that each journalist gets to ask the question they want and make them feel that you're answering them exclusively. Getting people to play the game is a good way to do it - while the others watch, you stand at the bar with one journalist and answer his questions in hushed tones. Then you make sure he plays the game next while you chat to another journalist.

Tanktics & Silicon Valley are visited next. We manage to capture Dave Jones for interview and pictures, then it's off to St Andrews to meet the journalists with food and alcohol. They want to try malt whisky. The first pub we visit has 11 different malts. Then we go for some traditional Scottish Mexican cuisine and to another pub to soak up some local colour (what journos call 'background'). I have to keep them happy till they fly out at 6am tomorrow. Do I see them off? Hey! I'm a professional.

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RACER™**



Now with extra grip!



Now on PlayStation™

• Player split screen racing • New tracks • Bikes as seen in the game.

**WHAT YOU
WAITING FOR...
CHRISTMAS?**

DUKE NUKEM



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SONY

3
DUKE
NUKEM
REALMS

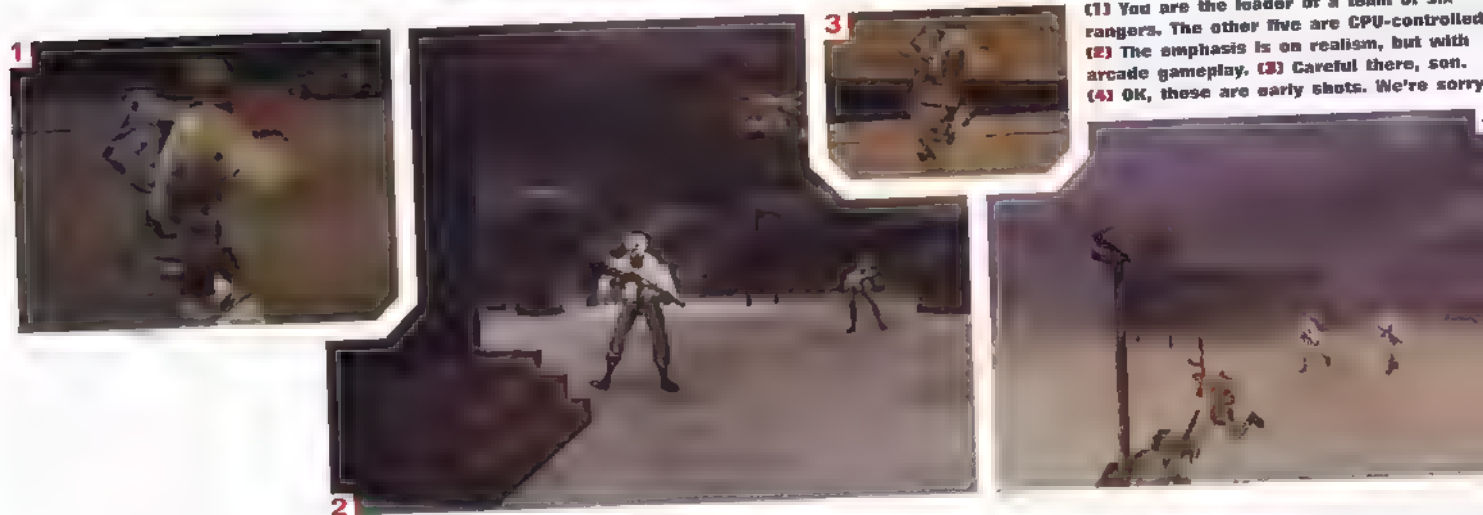
G

LOADING

58.75% COMPLETE

Prima! Screen

The section devoted to exclusive news of some of the best PlayStation games currently in development. Find out what coders are forecasting for the next six months...



(1) You are the leader of a team of six rangers. The other five are CPU-controlled. (2) The emphasis is on realism, but with arcade gameplay. (3) Careful there, son. (4) OK, these are early shots. We're sorry.

SPEC OPS: US ARMY RANGERS

May the force be with you

Style: 3D combat

Publisher: BMG Interactive

Developer: Zombie

Release date: February '98

Coders at Seattle-based Zombie are working on one of the most sophisticated combat games yet for the PlayStation. And we thought it high time you knew more. Although *Spec Ops* isn't due for release until the first quarter of next year, it's already shaping up to be one of the PS's most innovative titles.

Describe the game in 100 words
Spec Ops is a first person-viewed armed forces wargame. Although the emphasis is placed firmly on arcade action, the developers

have painstakingly researched the ways in which the US Rangers 'go about their business', so to speak. Rather than the player hurtling through the enormous 3D environments, splaying bullets with abandon, expect the meat of the game to be a mite more cagey. Indeed, there are sequences where you have to sither along the ground on your belly, edging ever nearer your foe. And the missions (and sub-missions) must be completed within a limited period of time

Is there anything here that we haven't seen in any other game? Certainly, there's a level of detail

here we've yet to see in a PlayStation combat game. Zombie spent time with the US Rangers and they advised them on strategy as well as allowing the team access to photos of vehicles which Zombie have faithfully

replicated. Even the gunfire and effects were recorded live.

What other games have influenced *Spec Ops*? Hmm. Difficult one, this. Certainly, the team have set their stall on producing the most realistic simulation of army combat to date. Indeed, there's nothing like this on the PlayStation, nor



There are five missions, each with four assignments, and you must complete within a limited time period.

(1) Bare it. Down to the last two satchels. **(2)** The Zombie guys recorded real guns for extra realism.



game like it. Whether Zombie can marry the undoubtedly impressive visual elements of *Spec Ops* with intense gameplay is the big question.

Any specific technical innovations to speak of?

The team have developed their own custom-built proprietary technology (Zombie's Viper) for *Spec Ops*. And they've utilised motion capture technology to ensure the rangers move realistically within the 3D environments.

What's the pedigree of the team?
Zombie was formed in 1993 by

co-founders Mark Long and Joanna Alexander. The team have a background in virtual reality and are keen to bring this experience into mainstream videogaming. So far they've produced a couple of PC games, *Ice And Fire*, and a *Doom*-style shooter, *ZPC*. As well as *Spec Ops*, the team are also working on *Spearhead*, a tank battle sim designed for multi-player internet use on PC and Macintosh.

So why should anyone care about *Spec Ops*?

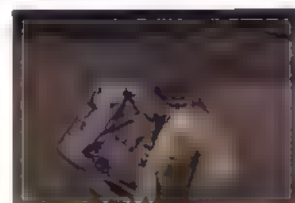
Because there's a dearth of really innovative PlayStation software around at the moment, with software companies playing it safe, chucking out arcade racers, sports sims and beat 'em ups. *Spec Ops* is a genuine shift in a different direction.

Tell us a secret no one else knows about the game

One of Zombie's founders, Mark Long, used to be a US Ranger himself. No wonder he's so keen to work on the project.



With luck, Zombie can combine the *Spec Ops*' tasteful visuals with choice gameplay.

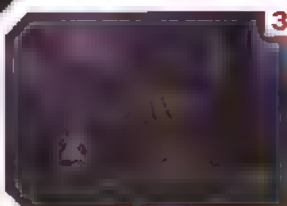
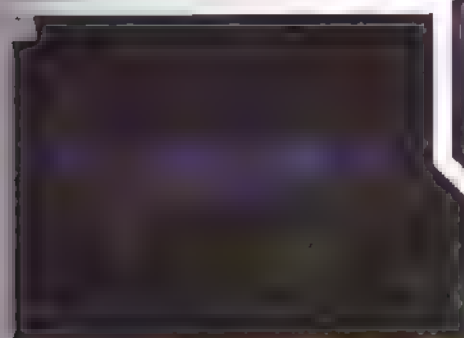


Command & Conquer, due out on the PC, will be the nearest to

of its ilk (the other five are intelligent CPU chaps) on the dangerous sorties should make this one of the most exciting titles in the new year.

Why will it be better than any other game of its ilk?
Simply because there is no other

...is going to be the best bit of the game? ...is amazing, but the command a platoon



(1) Zombie has gone so far as to utilise motion capture technology for realistic movement. **(2)** There are times when you have to crawl. **(3)** Be prepared for nights out.




I AM TAXI DRIVER




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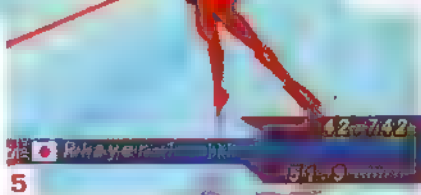
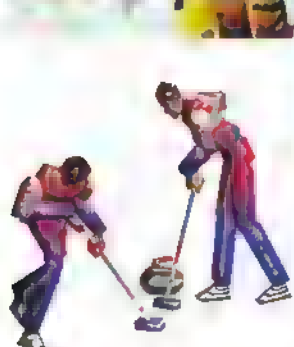


LOADING

69.25% COMPLETE

(1) The best-looking sports game ever?
 (2) Tap the poles in the slalom events.
 (3, 4) The 14 events include snowboarding. (5) The athletes have been motion captured. (6) Top outfit, eh?

1 Best time
 1:14.350
 Total time
 0.000



NAGANO WINTER OLYMPICS

Get your skates on

Style: Winter sports
 Publisher: Konami
 Developer: In-house
 Release date: January '98

'Nagano?', you enquire. Keep up, it's the town in Japan where the Winter Olympics are to be held. Konami, the undisputed masters of the multi-event sports simulation, are preparing the icy, polygonal fare for those that cannot compete in the games, but happen to own a PlayStation. Here's Konami's Jon Sloane to tell you more...

Describe your game in 100 words
Nagano Winter Olympics '98 is the official licensed videogame of the Winter Olympics. It's named after the town in Japan where the event will be held in February 1998. The game will feature real static, motion-captured athletes competing in 14 events, including downhill skiing, slalom, snow boarding, aerial skiing, speed skating and bobsleigh. In fact, of the seven sports appearing in the real thing we've included five — on y dropping ice hockey and biathlon. This gives players the opportunity to beat

their mates in 14 events (in five different disciplines. For example, Alpine Skiing comprises Downhill, Super-G and Giant Slalom). Best of all, you can play the game with three friends in head-to-head challenges. We've designed the game so that it gets easier to play after 11 o'clock at night when you've just returned from the pub after a few bevies.

Is there anything in this game that we've never seen in any other? I can safely say that this is the first PlayStation game to feature naked snowboarding! Of course, as it's very cold, there won't be much to see. What we're offering is a game that offers more of a long-term challenge than other 'button-bashing' sports games. Some events require precise timing, some furious power on the buttons, while others demand pinpoint accuracy.

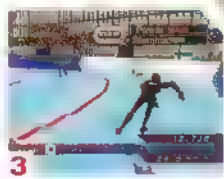
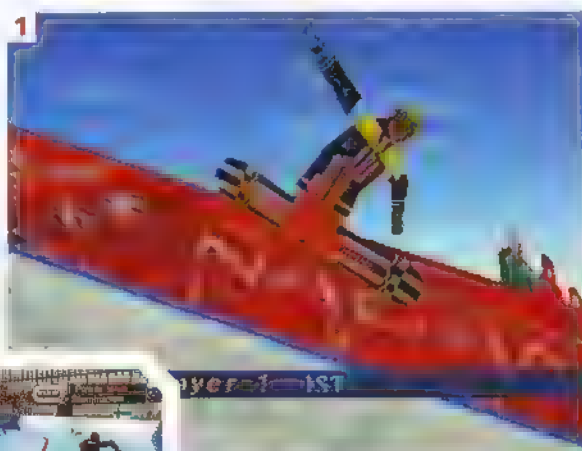
What other games have influenced *Nagano Winter Olympics*?

Konami have been producing multi-event sports games for over 10 years on virtually every home and arcade system there is. The root of all these types of games dates back to the first *Track & Field* coin-op released in UK arcades in 1983! Of course, the version that *Nagano* can be most closely compared to is

International Track & Field which we released on PlayStation last summer and has just been released on the Platinum label for £19.99 (major p.l.g.).

What's going to be the best bit of the game?

Getting back from the pub, slightly pissed, with three mates and beating the tar out of all of them



(1) Surely a bonus point for the anorak?
 (2) It's all downhill from now on. (3) Can you beat the tar out of your mates?



Other than that, standing on the podium as Great Britain at the end of the game and watching the Union Jack flying higher than all the other countries – taking us back to days when the summers were long and warm, the grass green, and Britain had an Empire spanning four continents, when the Germans were called Huns and the Americans were shooting their Presidents (hang on, they've done that a few times already)... Sorry, just reminding about my childhood there. In reality? You'll be able to emulate very fit and committed individuals who think nothing of donning wafer-thin, skin-tight lycra and immersing their bodies in sub-zero climates all for their country. And all this without lifting your lardy, unfit torsos out of comfy armchairs located in centrally-heated front rooms somewhere in Coventry.

Why will it be better than any other game of its ilk?

Simply because we've got more experience with this type of game than any other video games company. We invented the genre.

Are there any specific technical innovations to speak of?

The team making the game have visited the real arenas and courses in Nagano and topographically scanned every bump, twist and turn, ensuring that the tracks you see in the game are the real ones the athletes will compete on in February. Plus, we've significantly upgraded the motion-capture



technology we used on last year's *IT&F*. So much so that the team making the N64 version has opted to use the same motion-capture data.

What's the pedigree of the team?

They made *IT&F* – 'nuff said. Other than that, we're not allowed to reveal their names for fear that our competitors, hungry for Konami talent, will try to lure them to the dark side of the force with such ridiculous offers as a salary, a nine-to-five work schedule and – the ultimate temptation – days off!

Why should anyone care about your game?

Because it will be the first Winter Olympics game on any console that is fun to play. It's an upgraded, improved and altogether more frosty version of *IT&F* – and that game's been so popular it's still selling over a year after the original release.

Tell us a secret about the game that you've told no one else.

We've not revealed until now that the game will be Analog compatible. And it's got more events than the Nintendo 64 version!

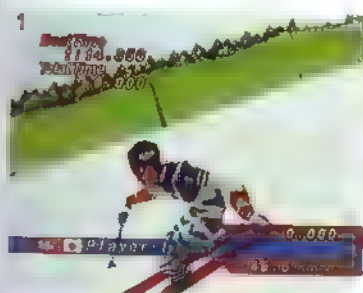


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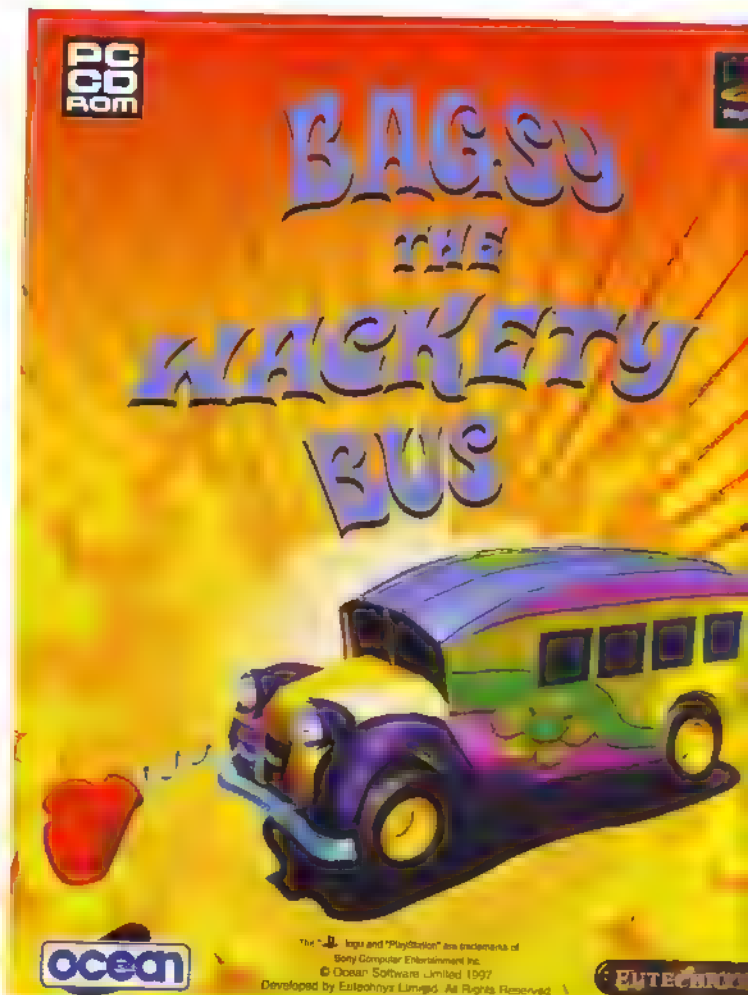
(1) *Nagano Winter Olympics* is being coded by the same team that wrote *International Track & Field*. (2) Konami's record at producing multi-event games is unrivalled. (3) View the action from many angles. (4) A render!



3



(1) Ocean's winter sports game, *Snow Racer*, will be Konami's toughest competitor – Ocean are exaggerating the speed of the skiers for faster gameplay. (2) He certainly looks the part. (3) It's bobsleigh. On computer.



ocean

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ENTERTAINMENT

LOADING

79.75% COMPLETE



(1) *Snow Racer* includes both skiing and snowboarding options. (2) When you can master the downhill, check out the slalom. (3) But if boarders are trendy. (4) There are plenty obstacles. Like trees.

SNOW RACER

Board to be wi

Style: Arcade action
Publisher: Ocean
Developer: Power and Magic
Release date: November '97

Cool Boarders is the major player when it comes to skating along ice. But while SCEE works on the sequel, French coder Power and Magic is sloping in with its own *Snow Racer*. The game includes both skiing and snowboarding options and publisher Ocean reckons it can wrestle the *Cool Boarders* mantle as its PR fellow, Stephen Hey, explains...

Describe your game in 100 words
Snow Racer is a pure arcade ski and snowboard simulation that delivers more variety, more intense action and more fun than any other game of its type. Players take the role of one of nine national ties and then get the chance to choose between the two distinct disciplines. The player develops in competition events that range from simple downhill to giant slaloms to ski jumping. Of course, there's a wide variety of game modes allowing practice, event competitions or straight cut action for the instant gratification

freaks among us (like me). Although you wouldn't find the landscapes in any geography textbook they are truly spectacular and *Alpine Racer*-ish.

Is there anything in this game that we've never seen in any other?

Yes. Well I think so. There are two disciplines to master - Ski and Board - plus *Snow Racer* features the latest, officially endorsed equipment from a lot of the world's greatest ski and board manufacturers - these have been incorporated into the game complete with logos. There are also changes in climate and lighting feature on

the arcade style courses.

What other games have influenced *Snow Racer*?

Alpine Racer, *Super G*, *Deep End Fishing*? You might want to include *Cool Boarders*, too.

What's going to be the best bit of the game?

This is a very personal thing. However, for me the best bit about *Snow Racer* is the feeling of sheer speed. When you approach an horrendous uprooted tree or have to duck avoid a low bridge, you need become very skilful, with your ski/boarder.





back of the console.*
[*This is a lie]

What's the pedigree of the team?
Power and Magic were formed in 1995 by Marc Djan, Djan, the founder and general manager of Ocean, France, was once the editor of French computer magazine *Gen 4*. Power and Magic have a research and development team of 20 people, some of whom have been involved in titles ranging from *Mister Nutz* to *Fade To Black*.

Why should anyone care about your game?
In the arcades snow-racing games are incredibly successful, and deservedly so, because they're very cool. Nobody has managed to transfer these thrills,



sense of speed and action to a home console yet - we think this game delivers it all.

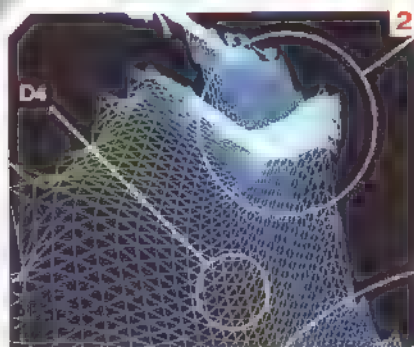
Tell us a secret about the game you've told no one else
To make the game more adrenaline-pumping the speed is exaggerated. For instance, you can reach incredible speeds of up to 250 kph and skim past cable cars after flying over a ski jump.



[1] The designers have come up with quirky characters. [2] And they're pleased with the shadow effects in the landscapes. [3] You can practise the slopes first. [4] But there's no David Vine.



To create an even greater sense of speed, the pace of the snow has been greatly exaggerated. [2] Not a game of strategy, as you might expect. The game's designers have tried to ensure that each character has its own quirks and values for that added variety.



PC CD ROM

A TOP DOWN 3D RACER
AVAILABLE SOON

PlayStation

CHOOSE YOUR MOTOR CHOOSE

WHEELS 31

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Mindscape's entrance into the world of PlayStation basketball may be a tad too late. Nevertheless, the game has some impressive features, particularly the visuals.

WORLD LEAGUE BASKETBALL

Scoop in the hoop



You can view the action from a number of different angles. Like this awkward one.

Style: Basketball, foot
Publisher: Mindscape
Developer: in house (USA)
Release date: November

Been a bit quiet on the basketball front recently. But here's another, and it's a bit different because it's just about the only hoopular title without the NBA moniker. Not that you're likely to see much of a difference when you're squeaking up and down the court...

Describe the game...

Well, if we're perfectly candid it's more of the same. A realistic arcade simulation of basketball? Why yes, only Mindscape's takes that. Instead of the Los Angeles Whatyemecalits bouncing across the shiny surface, there are 32 International teams, hence the 'World' in the title. What else? The players have been motion captured to create the realistic movement. There are millions of polygons shifting around the detailed 3D environment. And there are three different modes of play: Exhibition, Season and Tournament. Woo hoo

But surely, with so many basketball games already on the shelf...

Dead right. Let's see. There's *NBA Jam* for the hoopular hinks. Then there's SCE's excellent *Total NBA '97* (and *Total NBA '96*). Add Konami's *In The Zone* and the EA Sports *NBA* games and you've a list heading towards your elbow. You have to wonder whether basketball fans would really rather play Great Britain versus Croatia, as opposed to Chicago Bulls and Houston Rockets.

So, what are *World League Basketball*'s chances of making it in the big league?

The visuals are certainly tidy enough, especially the shiny court and the reflections on the surface - they're really neat. The player animation isn't quite as fluid as, say, *Total NBA '97*, nor are the players as detailed, and maybe it's just a mite too slow for experienced hoopers. It's one of those games that would have made a good impression, had it

appeared when the PlayStation was launched. But we're two years down the line now... The sound effects are excellent, though - in fact, the bouncing ball and catching sounds are the best in any PlayStation basketball game. We'll catch up with the finished version in the next couple of issues.



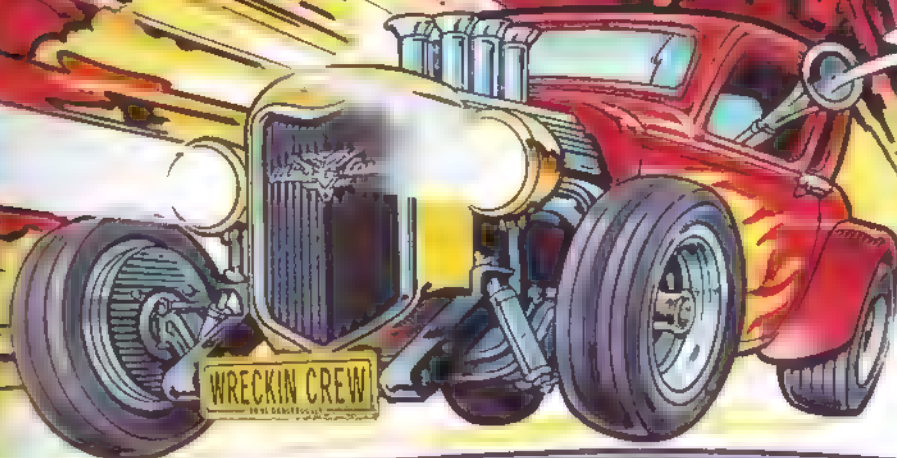
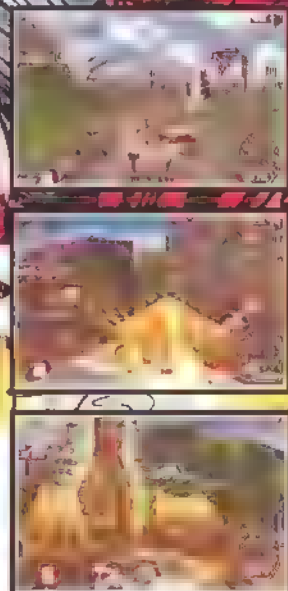
One of *World League Basketball*'s most impressive features is the reflections on the shiny court surface.

BLISTERINGLY FAST HOT-ROD RACING ACTION!

WRECKIN' CREW

DRIVE DANGEROUSLY

COULD PUSH
"32 BIT RACERS IN A WELCOME
NEW DIRECTION."
EDGE
"WILL HAVE A SIMILAR IMPACT TO
"MARIO KART" SPLENDOR."
"THE OFFICIAL PLAYSTATION
MAGAZINE"



PC
CD-ROM



LOADING

100% COMPLETE

primal
screen

(1) As with the original, Psygnosis promise lots of secret moves. (2) Up to four can play. (3) Impressive stadium, eh? (4) Must score. (5) Potentially dangerous.

ADIDAS POWER SOCCER 2

Can they kick it

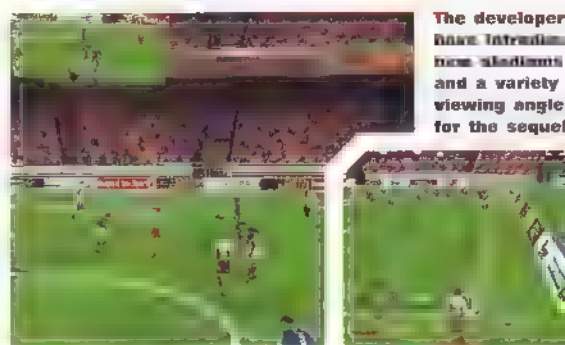
Style: Football
Publisher: Psygnosis
Developer: Shen (France)
Release date: December

Veteran PlayStationers will be aware of the original *adidas Power Soccer*. It was the game that folk didn't quite like as much as *Actua Soccer*. However Psygnosis, not ones to take their ball home, have returned to the tactics board. The developers, Shen, are based in France and we chatted with their man, Elysee Ade...

What's the major improvement over the original, then? The gameplay. It was already good in the first *adidas Power Soccer* but we think we've succeeded in improving it. Now, almost anyone can get used to the controls in less than one hour of play. The gameplay's much more accessible but it still holds secrets, which can be discovered after many plays. The new depth of gameplay provides an increased replay value for the game.

What makes *PS2* different from other soccer games? *Power Soccer 2* boasts the best motion-capture animations yet seen on a PlayStation soccer game. Usually, motion capture slows down the gameplay but we've managed to get quick responses while keeping smooth animations. The number of player animations is huge as the game has now around 120 moves. It's almost twice the amount of animations we had in the original *adidas Power Soccer*.

So you've decided to go the whole hog and give us the first



The developers have introduced new stadiums and a variety of viewing angles for the sequel.

four-player option...

Playing a soccer game is almost pointless without a human opponent and with three of them (four players) the game takes on a new dimension as players establish more complex tactics. They can play in various ways: two on two, three on one, four versus the computer. The fun's even greater, so we felt obliged to allow up to four players to play using the Multi Tap, which is also more economic than the link cable and works better for soccer games.

A lot of motion-captured footie games are really sluggish. How can

you strike a balance between playability and quality animation? Most of the motion-captured games are slow because once the action has begun, the player has to wait until it's over to be able to perform another one. In *PS2*, you can program sequences of moves so that actions can be chained quickly. For example, the player can receive the ball without knowing what he'll do with it afterwards. As in a real soccer match, the ball can pass through three or four players before the last player performs a bicycle, or any super action, which concludes a strategy.



(1) Developers Shen reckon each player has some 120 animations. (2) Looks like the fouls are just as bad.

ONE MAN. ONE WORLD.



VISUAL CONCEPTS™



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feedback

This month your whinges include overrated games, demo disc grievances, and falling standards of software...

One man demo

I'm writing to comment on the quality of your recent demo discs. Admittedly *Rapid Racer* and *Nightmare Creatures* are both superb demos, but the usual standard is quite low. I realise this is no fault of yours, as you can only use demos you are given but it is poor that companies do not see the huge potential of this (free?) advertising. Coming back to your recent demo disc, the *FI '97* demo actually dissuaded me from buying the game. The fact that the demo had a time limit and no challenge or goal just left me thinking 'why?' and allowed me to realise that the handling is poor and the crashes unrealistic. Demos should be treated as mini games if they are to inspire the reader and encourage them to buy the final software, and as such should incorporate important aspects of games: a challenge and a goal.

Timothy Hanagan,
NC012116@newcollege.co.uk

Hmm. Software companies are hardy to start treating demos as mini games simply because of the fear of giving away too much. The demo CD is there to allow you to get a feel for a game. And, of course, it's a means for

these companies to show off their wares at very little expense. We do give them a demo specification which is a guide to what they should be doing with their demo: how much to give away and how to structure it. A badly designed demo can leave potential purchasers disillusioned. *Psychosis*, though, has consistently produced splendid games and quality demos, which is why it has such a high profile in the world of PlayStation gaming. Hopefully, you're enjoying this month's demo CD which incidentally, we consider to be the best ever for the mag.



Born under a fad sign?

In the days when it was Nintendo vs Sega, Sega was always thought to have the 'coolest' system and selection of perfectly converted arcade games, while the SNES always suffered a loss of quality in its, a bit more original games (*Mario* and *Zelda*). Every developer worth his/her paycheck seemed to create games solely for the SNES, with possible poor-quality Mega Drive games to follow. In Japan, they went nuts over the SNES and its games. Now, it seems that Sony has the best of both worlds: a stylish super-cool system, great arcade conversions, all the developers working for it. But Sega has the short straw - chunky, ugly machines with only its own developers creating games for it, and poor PS conversions. Is this why the PS is so popular? It takes the good points of both the warring 16-bit systems that won the war over?

And as for the Nintendo 64 like the Advanced Photo System (APS) - it's just a fad, and soon developers will realise the limitations of working with it. Cartridges can't store much information, and anti-aliasing just means graphics lacking in detail.

I think the PlayStation really is going to be the top games console well into the next millennium, and no one should have any doubts about getting one.

Richard Magrath,
Warrington.LtRicardo@aol.com



GOOD GAME, GOOD GAME...

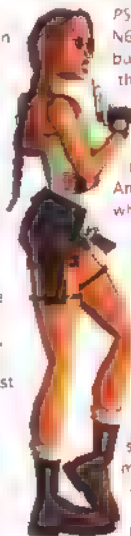
Where have all the good games gone? *Tomb Raider*, *Resident Evil*, *Wipeout 2097* and *C&C*, granted, and a few others, maybe, but still only a few gems in a quagmire of quack crap which is the SCEE library of current gems on release. The August issue of *PSM* demonstrated the overwhelming availability of flightless bird droppings. With an average score of four, in your own words, the current flock of excrement is '...below average. Probably has some serious game play or life span flaws'. Whatever happened to SCEE keeping a tight control on the software? In July the average score was six, comment: 'a case of "why'd they do that?"'. Payable but with some dodgy bits'. In June, the average score was seven, comment: '...a great title with minor irritations, but still a worthy purchase'.

Hmm... is the PlayStation past its sell by date? I've just bought a PC. Do I now abandon my PS and buy better quality, cheaper games for my PC? When are the crew at SCEE going to start kicking the crap in the gutter? When was the last time they refused a licence to produce a

game which effectively turns my PS into a toilet? Bring on TR2 in tears, Tighe

Easy Tighe. Okay, so there's been a fair number of dogs since the PlayStation's launch but at least you're in a position to pick and choose. A lot of the folk at *PSM* have both a PlayStation and an N64, and how many games can you buy for the latter? You're getting more than a little bit previous when you ask, 'Is the PlayStation past its sell-by date?' What about *Tomb Raider 2*, *Final Fantasy VII*, *FI '97*, *G-Police*, *NHL '98*, *We could go on*. And we're talking about a console which costs £130, not a £1000 PC.

Yes, we have our bugbears with SCEE (see *Quality Control* feature *PSM19*) but we'd rather have a choice of 300 games than six. And don't get a msty-eyed about the PC games market because you can multiply the tosh that comes out on the PS by about 15 when it comes to the PC. Hopefully, software companies will start taking a few more risks - how many more great driving games, beat 'em ups and sports sims do we need - and fingers crossed, the guys at DMA Design might just have done it with *Grand Theft Auto*.



It seems like you're attempting to convince yourself rather than persuade others of the joys of the PlayStation, Richard. Not sure what you mean about the SNES suffering from a loss of quality in games such as *Mario* and *Zelda*. The SNES had some damned great titles, a though, as you rightly point out, the Mega Drive was a ways regarded as being the more fashionable of the two consoles. The reason why the PlayStation is such a

massive success is down to Sony's dedication to promoting the console and their preceding groundwork with third party developers, coupled with Sega and Nintendo's somewhat lackadaisical attitude towards Sony. They thought they had a unshakeable grip on the videogames market and they were wrong. Simple as that. As for the cartridge versus CD argument, there are two sides to every story, but at the end of the day (Des) it's

Please state fully how accident happened.

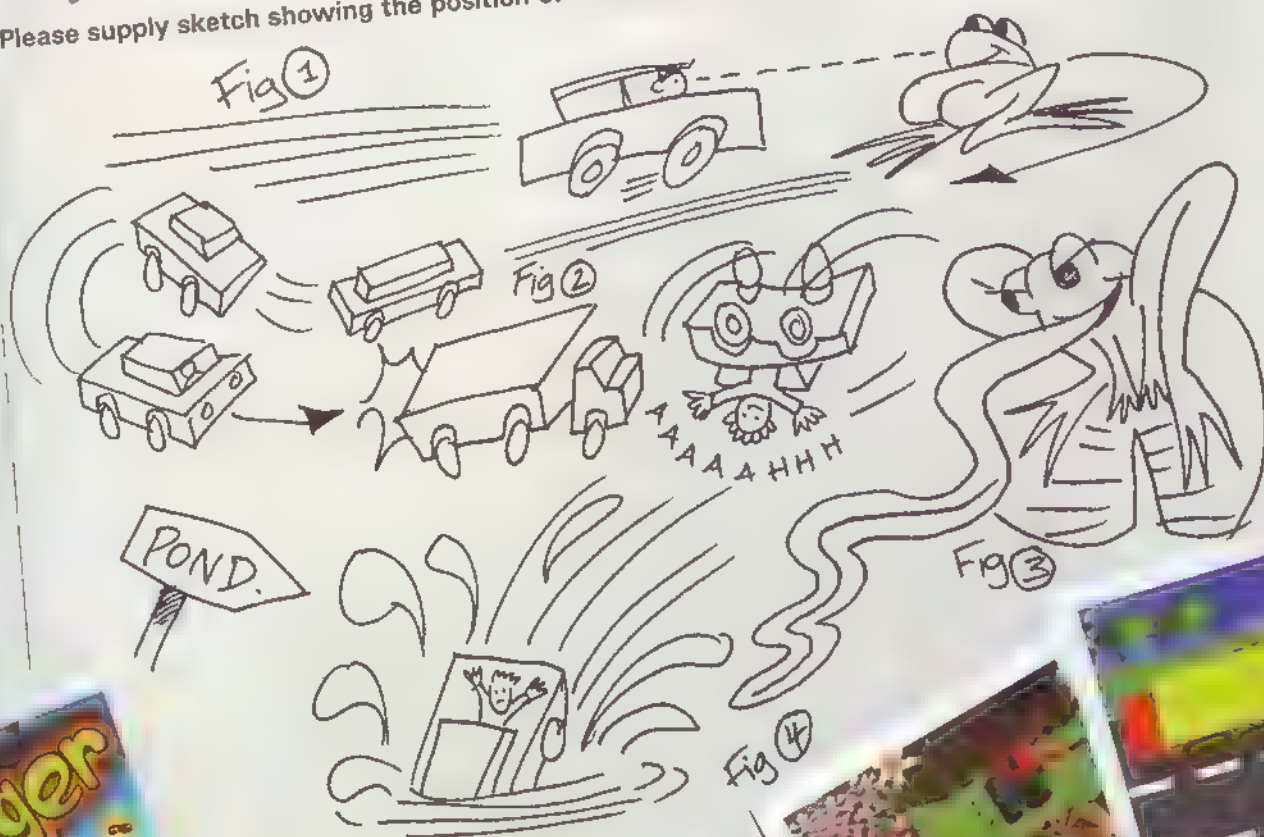
While travelling at a steady 65 mph, I saw a frog I recognised from School, pull a moonie causing me to swerve at least 3 times in an attempt to kill him.

Only at this stage did I notice the truck that was to remove me from the road and deposit me into the pond.

While doing 4 Somersaults (with tuck & pike) he added insult to injury by sticking out his heat seeking tongue and giving me a sign implying that 'I was a bad driver.'

Please supply sketch showing the position of vehicles prior and subsequent to collision.

DESCRIPTION OF ACCIDENT



www.frogger.co

Letters

E-mail psm@futurenet.co.uk World Wide Web site <http://www.futurenet.co.uk>

► comes down to the quality of the games themselves. And *Croc* isn't as good as *Super Mario 64*. Sure, the PlayStation will be around for quite a while, but who's to say that Sega won't return with a corking machine to succeed the Saturn? You're only as good as your last console.

Sensible question

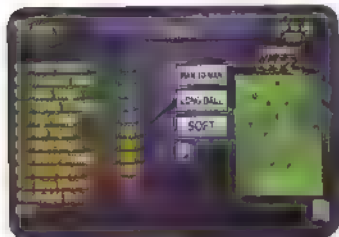
Just wondered what Sensible Software are doing now? I think the PlayStation could seriously benefit from the Sensible boys using their unique understanding to make an ultimately playable game. I know there was talk of *Cannon Fodder* being updated for the PS, but when will we see a football game the likes of their Amiga forefathers? The PS is crying out for a true football game with the pace and playability of *SWOS*. The market is there, so why do we keep seeing these cosmetically lovely games with no balls? (No pun intended.) I know many people, including myself, that still own an Amiga purely because there's still no rival for Sensible's masterpiece. Come on, boys, give us what we really want.

A Dewesall,
North London

The guys at Sensible Software are still with us, you'll be pleased to learn. And at the moment they're in the throes of producing *Sensible Soccer 2000* for the PC. *Sensi 2000* features motion captured players (from Ipswich Town) with some 400 different moves involved, apparently. And it's all in 3D, but Sensible reckon it's managed to retain the playability of the older versions while bringing the game up to date in terms of visuals and animation. Now the big question is, are we going to see a PlayStation version? The honest answer is, 'we don't know'. Nothing has been signed yet, but we reckon Sensible would be foolish to ignore the massive console market. You can forget an updated *Cannon Fodder*, though. But look out for *Have A Nice Day*, their rock'n'roll adventure which will be making an appearance next year.

Grey matter

Why is it that most games out now either involve driving cars, beating seven shades out of your opponent or imitating *Doom*? What ever happened to strategy games which made your brain tick? Anyway, three cheers for the soon-to-be released *Premier Manager 98*, and *Constructor*. The only trouble is, we don't have enough of these games around. I've just seen the graphics on your

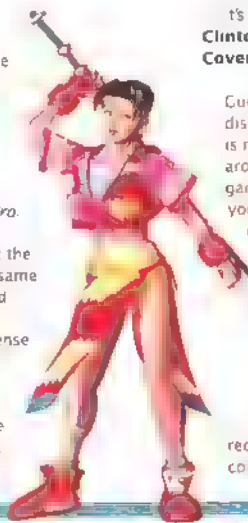


Games to make your brain tick: the much-awaited *Premier Manager '98*.

WHAT'S THE SCORE?

I've had my PlayStation since it first graced our shops way back in September '95 and have enjoyed a couple of years' worth of entertaining gaming. But something's been bugging me for some time. The ratings that the so-called top games are getting are totally over the top, used to wait to find out what the mags said about them, but now I just rent them out before I buy.

In my eyes the most overrated game of all time has to be *Micro Machines V3*, which all you gaming mags scored highly. My God, what a let down. The camera angle made it a most unplayable and the multi-player games were even worse. Another prime example is *ISS Pro*, which had the graphics but not the playability. The same thing can be said about *Porsche Challenge* (no sense of speed), *Die Hard Trilogy* (except for the *Virtua Cop* clone, totally boring), *Rage Racer* (too



easy) and many more.

It seems that the games which aren't so well-known and highly rated are a lot better, like *Soul Blade* (much better than *Tekken 2*), *MechWarrior 2*, *Command & Conquer* (one of the best PS games ever), *Twisted Metal World Tour* (should have got a nine at least), and *Need For Speed* (totally engrossing). All these games have lasted the test of time and you'll come back to them way after you have finished them. It seems that nobody explores the longevity of these 'top-selling' games and I think it's time you started.

Clinton Deakin,
Coventry

Guess we'll have to agree to disagree. A games reviewer's opinion is much his own, although many folk around the office pay most of the games. Much in the same way that you're expressing your opinion, we express ours. It's why we're here. Everyone's entitled to stick their ear in. We love *ISS Pro*, find *Tekken 2* a super basher to *Soul Blade*. We think *Need For Speed 2* stinks but reckon *Rage Racer* goes like the very devil. *Twisted Metal World Tour* did receive a whopping nine points and collected a StarPlayer for its efforts.

demo disc for *Overboard!* and they aren't bad at all. Now, do you remember *Civilization* by that S d bloke from MicroProse? Well, couldn't we have some of that with some fantastic graphics? I still have my Amiga A600 and I love playing *Premier Manager 1-3* and *Civilization* but they could be even better with decent graphics. What's wrong with a couple more management games on the PlayStation? How about a cycle manager game, eh? The same kind of presentation as a football season after season physics, mechanics, three day tours, a three week long Tour de France, sponsorship, buying/selling riders, different bikes, injuries, maps, tactics... I could go on forever. So come on SCE, you must have hundreds of ideas for new strategy games.

Paul Brazier,
Liverpool

Why not submit your game ideas to a few software companies? Check out the directory of phone numbers on page 147. In the meantime, Ocean has recently released *Transport Tycoon*, *Theme Park* and *Lemmings 3D* exercise the little grey cells as does *AIV Evolution Global*. And you'll be pleased to learn that *Populous 3* and *Theme Hospital* are also in the pipeline. Inevitably, there are economic reasons for the relative dearth of strategy

games. Driving games and beat 'em ups shift units, so they're much less a financial risk for publishers. But there'll come a time when, our appetite for destruction satiated, the games publishers will realise that a little more wit and invention is required. Try out the two-player *Overboard!* demo too - it's a lot of fun.

Where's the proof?

I've been waiting for *F1 '97* for a while now and jumped at the chance to buy your magazine for the demo CD. Truly excellent - a much better arcade experience than before. But on reading the review, something didn't quite add up. It read like a list of the game's attributes and technical data, carefully bordered by pictures of the tracks, drivers and circuits. The cynic among us may think the information was garnished from a pre-release press pack and that the pretty pictures were splashed across the spread to divert our attention away from the review content. Where were the reviewer's likes and dislikes, his personal comments which give the reader a better impression of how the game actually plays? There was very little mention of the split-screen racing, no mention of how the new circuits played, no reason why Jacques

Under promoted?: PSM's exclusive *F1 '97* demo and review comes under criticism...



Villeneuve had a darkened photo and no comment on how the different cars handled. Your biggest review yet, and it just didn't seem to tell us anything new. Please set my mind to rest, as I'm sure I'm wrong about this, and you're not going down the twisted road of deceit just to increase your magazine circulation.

Mark Head,
mark.head@virgin.net



I eagerly awaited the demo of *F1 '97* but am now gutted. Why does it only pay for such a short time and why doesn't it let you complete the race offered, as in the earlier demo? As I flew round Silverstone thinking this is the dog's private, the screen faded into blackness, then presented me with a load of information that I already knew from your lot at PSM. I felt like a teenager getting some action behind the bike sheds and then being sprung by a prefect in the past you've released many enjoyable demos with taxing gameplay. I feel betrayed by this meagre offering.

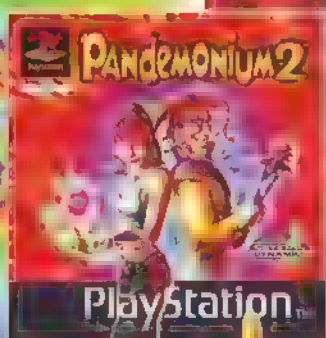
Jason Mills,
Bedford

Lots of letters arriving on the subject of *F1 '97*. One person liked the demo, the other thought it stank. How hum. We're going to gauge the reaction over the coming weeks, and next month we'll give *Psygnosis* the right to reply to the criticism offered. What we can say is that *F1 '97* is the fastest-selling PlayStation game in this country has ever seen. Also, our reviewer is a respected freelance writer (ex Game Ed of *PC Gamer* magazine) and he took the game away for a week and played it to death. We certainly don't need to travel down the twisted road of deceit to increase the circulation of the magazine. PSM is for you, not the videogames industry.



twisted

CURVY



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Letters

Q&A, Official UK PlayStation Magazine, Future Publishing, 30 Monmouth Street, Bath BA1 2BW.



- 1 Is there any news on the Premier Manager games?
2 Are there any games like Brian Lara Cricket (Mega Drive) coming out on the PlayStation?
3 Is the company that makes Sensible Soccer planning on creating one on the PlayStation?

Mark Carrington,
Emsworth

- 1 Gremi's Premier Manager 98 is just about finished. We'll be reviewing it in the next couple of months.
2 No Brian Lara, but look out for a possible release from EA Sports next year.
3 Sensible Software are currently working on a new PC version of Sensible Soccer 2000 and they're most certainly going to come up with the goods for the PlayStation. Could be a way off, yet.

Could you recommend a good football game? We've played a few and have only been impressed by ISS Pro. Naturally this title has been on the market a while, now so should wait for a sequel, or for another company to improve on ISS Pro's current status of BEST FOOTIE GAME?

Paul Williams,
Croydon

ISS Pro is the best football game on the PlayStation. An indisputable fact. Unless you disagree with it. But Actual Soccer 2 looks quite good, and Adidas Power Soccer 2 is on the way. But be brave, good fellow and take the bull by the horns. ISS Pro is the chap.

- 1 Will Crash 2 or Croc be compatible with the Analog pad?
2 In America I saw an advert that said the Saturn was the most capable of on-line

gaming. Is this true?
1 Will Tekken 3 come along with an add-on so the PlayStation can handle it?
2 Will Final Fantasy VII be changed from the original, as the American version was?
3 In Cool Boarders I did a fake to a misty 360 and me anchovy grab and got 835 points, but my friends tell me they can get at least a thousand. Are they telling lies?

Roland Benjamin

- 1 The good news is, they're both compatible with the Analog pad.
2 Console on-line gaming is a non-starter for the foreseeable future. No support, no interest. Mind you, in the next millennium...
3 Hand it? Add on? Tekken 3 will be suitably tailored, but there'll be no add-ons.
4 Yes, they'll be changing the Japanese text once again.
5 They're almost certainly telling fakes.

- 1 What is better – the NeGcon controller or the Analog controller?
2 When will Moto Racer be out, and is it any good?
3 Will/when will Championship Manager 2 be released?
4 Is Inside Soccer any good? If it's crap, then what others could you recommend?

ben.vassie@atlascopco.se

- 1 We prefer the Analog controller. It's more versatile. But the NeGcon is well made too.
2 It's out very soon, and it's great. Rev on to page 10.
3 You're going to have to wait until the new year.
4 It's crap. Try ISS Pro.

Having owned a PlayStation for a few months, my favourite game

is still Ridge Racer. I was in the Dome club in Birmingham recently and I saw a 3D racing game from Namco called Rave Racer. Looking at some of the tunnel driving sequences, immediately recognised it as a Ridge Racer clone. And after having a blast on it, I realised it was indeed Ridge Racer but with three brand new, tasty-looking tracks. The graphics and the music were also much better than in the original. I could easily have spent loads of money and time on it, except that there was a queue of people waiting. Have you heard of, or played this game? And will Namco be releasing it on the PS?

Steve Blissett
Steve.Blissett@netuk.wang.com

Rave Racer is an excellent coin op but the nearest you'll get to it on the PlayStation is Ridge Racer (9/10, PSM21), the third in the Ridge series. And it's nice to hear someone praise Ridge Racer. We still think it's brilliant too.

- 1 Are there any plans for a Wipeout 3?
2 Do Origin have any plans for a PlayStation version, or sequel to the fantastic PC Bioforge?

Daniel Jackson,
Wirral

- 1 It's unlikely that there'll be another Wipeout in its present form, although Psygnosis would be reluctant to let the high-profile title disappear altogether.
2 We haven't heard of plans for a version of Bioforge. Try Resident Evil instead.
1 I heard that there was going to be a director's cut of Resident Evil. If this is true, and when will it be out?
2 There's going to be an X-Files game on the PC this October. Are there any plans for the

PlayStation?
1 Is Command & Conquer: Red Alert coming out on the PlayStation?

Timothy Bentham,
London

- 1 End of November. Oh, and it's coming out.
2 Read SFX magazine for all the latest sci-fi news. But we can tell you that an X-Files game is expected to appear on the PS next autumn.
3 We'll be reviewing the game next month.
1 Should I shell out £90 for Time Crisis? The thing is, I've only got a 14-inch TV – would this cause any problems with difficult target?
2 If I buy an imported Analog pad, will it still fit into my 'PAL' ports and be compatible with my games?

Kurtis Jacques,
Wales

- 1 Wait for the PAL version – it'll be cheaper. And you'll just have to keep a steady hand using a 4-inch TV.
2 It will fit into your machine and the 'rumb' effect will work too. There aren't that many compatible games at the moment, though.

Some time ago I had a SNES console. All I played on it was Starfox but I soon got bored with trying to get good enough to reach the last level and bought a Data East 'Act on Replay' device to cheat. Can you get similar things to work on CD-ROM games for the PC or PlayStation? If not, it seems that only the die-hard fanatics will have the patience to persist to the bitter end of every game? Or am I quite out of touch?

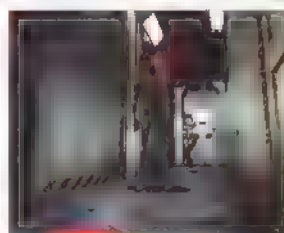
Francis,
F.Farquhar@exeter.ac.uk



Namco's Ridge Racer (9/10, PSM21) – PlayStation's answer to the excellent coin op Rave Racer.

Oh, yes, Date's Act on Replays are available for the PlayStation. But when you pay £45 for a game, surely they deserve a bit of perseverance?

- 1 I recently read that a PS memory card can only have data rewritten on to it so many times before it deteriorates and becomes useless. Is this the case, and if so how many games can be saved?
2 It suddenly occurred to me the other day that any New music compilation album



Resident Evil – look out for a Microsoft X-Box in November.

features songs from Virgin records, Sony records, and so on, all on the same disc. What's to stop anyone releasing a retro CD on the PS featuring games from a mixture of publishers and not just Namco/Williams? Let me guess... Sony's licensing laws say it can't be done?
3 In the T-shirt article, PSM22, you didn't know the origin of the T-shirt, and invited us to tell. It was actually given away by Sinclair User mag to players with high scores/times/etc.
4 How about printing the e-mail addresses of various companies so we can write to them about retro games, and thus reduce your mailbox of people asking for Sensi, Elite et al.

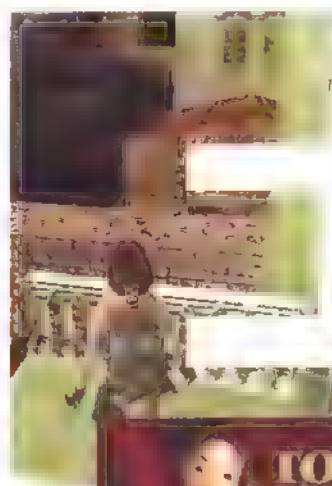
R. Walledge
rjw04@students.stir.ac.uk

- 1 We haven't got any empirical evidence to reveal how long a memory card lasts. Heck, we've got loads of things knocking around here... Any reader contributions to this subject would be more than welcome.
2 The Now albums are an entirely different case to videogames. Record companies are happy to flog the rights to a single to give the track a longer life and help promote the album from whence it came. There's no doubt that at some point in the future, there will be compilations – after all, it's happened on every other platform.
3 And we'll check out a few e-mail addresses for you electronic media types.





2 player game



2 player game

Formula 1 97

Reader offer† £44.99
 (In-store £49.99 **SAVE £5**)
 Need of the original F1 bestseller,
 the new F1 97 boasts even more
 graphics, improved performance
 and a 2 player split screen option. Comes
 with slow motion commentary from Murray
 and Martin Brundle.
 Available now

Tomb Raider II

Reader offer† £34.99
 (In-store £44.99 **SAVE £10**)
 Lara Croft is back in the most talked about
 Playstation game this year. And this time
 she's got even more tricks tucked up those
 cute sleeves. Starting at the Great Wall of
 China, your search takes you to Venice, Tibet
 and underwater worlds, where new enemies
 stand between you and your goal.
 Available in November

FIFA 98: Road to the World Cup

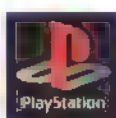
Reader offer† £34.99
 (In-store £39.99 **SAVE £5**)
 Attempt to qualify for the most famous
 football tournament in the world. Choose a
 country and a squad, then get ready to kick-
 off. There are not on-captured players, loads
 of special moves and even commentary from
 Andy Gray, the voice of football John Motson
 and that old smoothy Des Lynam.
 Available in November

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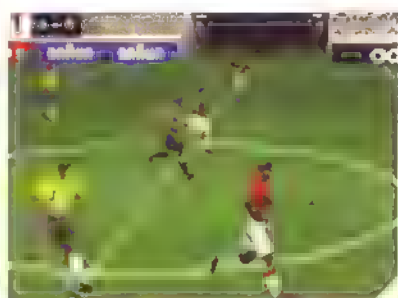
the beautiful game

The latest instalment of the world's most successful football game is set to hit the shelves next month. We can hardly contain our excitement...

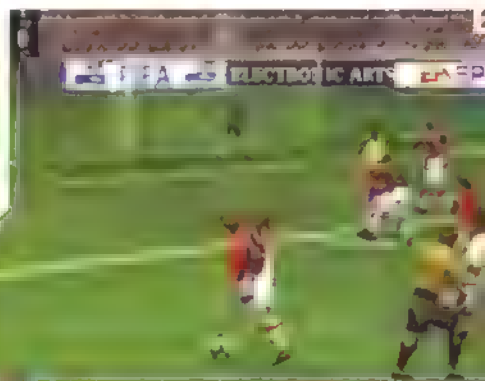
If there's one thing more certain than Andy Cole missing a sitter, it's that FIFA games will always sell. No matter how bad they are, come December, Joe Public will wander down to his local VideoGameArama gagging to hand over £45.

Rather than use its World Cup licence for just one money-making game, however, EA has managed to spread the jam very thinly this time. Once you qualify in this, it's game over until *FIFA World Cup '98* arrives. Hmm.

You start by picking a team from the 172 nations available, or you can play the usual FIFA game by choosing from the 16 national leagues also included. This can lead to interesting matches, like Colombia taking on the mighty Coventry, or New Zealand having a pop at Newcastle. When we played the game we also came across a few amusing inaccuracies. Gooner fans may not



(1) AC Milan get ready to defend as the Brazilian forwards head for goal. (2) Making the space was the easy bit - he's got to get the ball on target.



(1) The game uses the familiar 'cross under the player' system to let you know who you are controlling. (2) The kick off. (3) Just a little kick will send him flying...

be thrilled to see their dynamic, top-of-the-table team turned into a set of arthritic 45-year-olds, or Ian Wright losing a few pigments to become Ian White.

As ever, EA sports have employed their motion-capture system and, as ever, there's the annoying time lag between you deciding you want to make a tackle and the move actually appearing on screen. This really should have been sorted out by now, but it looks like the curse of the previous FIFA games is still hanging around.

Sonically, the game is a big improvement, though. Instead of the dodgy techno of previous FIFAs, EA have signed up bands like Blur to give the sound that bit of oomph it's been missing. The commentary is being handled by Andy Gray, John Motson and Des Lynam. Some great names,

but, as in real life, great individuals don't always make a good team - just look at Middlesbrough. During play it never sounds like they're actually talking about the game, but just reading

lines in a studio.

Ultimately, you can't avoid the feeling that the game isn't ready and is being rushed out for the lucrative Christmas period. With more time, this latest instalment in the FIFA story could be great, but at the moment it's not looking too good. Which is a shame for a once ground-breaking series.



DEVELOPER

Electronic Arts

RELEASE DATE:

December

PLAYERS:

Two

FEES

EA Sports

ORIGIN:

Canada

STYLE:

Football sim

For once, men will be interested in four play



super football champ



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Available from October



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PrePlay | Duke Nukem



After being told it was impossible to convert *Duke Nukem* to the PlayStation, Aardvark are challenging expectations with their adaptation of the PC classic...

At a time when most coders are releasing games with outrageously high polygon counts, Aardvark have taken a gamble by debunking the trend and producing a title so dated looking it makes *Manic Miner* look contemporary. Okay, so maybe we're exaggerating a little, but you get the idea.

Take just one glance at *Duke Nukem* and you have to concede that sprites have had their day. But they do have one distinct advantage over polygons – the enemy count. With polygon based

blasters you can only have four or five enemies on the screen at one time, or the frame rate drops dramatically, killing the game. This doesn't happen with sprite based games like *Doom*, where you can be attacked by up to 30 enemies at once. Besides, graphics have never been *Duke's* strong point; its main focus has always been on gameplay and an irreverent sense of humour, the best examples of which are the charming *Dukeisms* uttered by our hero such as 'Come get some', 'That's gotta hurt', and 'Shake it baby' as he hands a dollar bill to a lap dancer.

The basic premise of *Duke Nukem* is simple, if incredibly clichéd: Aliens have taken over the Earth and naturally you're the only one who can stop them from wiping out the human race. The game is split into four chapters, each one varying greatly from the one that precedes it – for example, the first sees you slaughtering your way through the red light areas of Hollywood, while the second takes place in an abandoned lunar colony. But while the first three chapters will be familiar to PC gamers, it's the fourth chapter – divided into seven levels – that'll be much talked about. In a classic demonstration of *Duke* humour, some of the levels



The enemies range from semi-naked women to fat alien hyper hitches from hell. Nice game.



involve tongue-in-cheek takes on well-known PlayStation titles, while others see you touring nightclubs and late-night kebab houses... We won't tell you more, for fear of spoiling the fun.

The developers have also pulled off a wonderful coup by including a multi-player option so that you sneak up on your mates and shoot them in the back. Ignoring the current trend for split-screen action, Aardvark have opted for the criminally under-used link up cable (which isn't working too well now, but we've been assured this will be amended by the time we get a reviewable version).

As it stands *Duke* is looking like one of the best first person blasters we've seen for a long time – perfect fare to tide us over until *Quake* rears its ugly head.



Duke Nukem is one of the bloodiest games we've ever seen – it makes *Doom* look like *Parappa The Rapper*.

GT Interactive ■ RELEASE DATE:

November ■ PLAYERS:

One or two

Aardvark ■ ORIGIN:

UK ■ STYLE:

3D shoot 'em up

FORMULA KARTS

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PrePlay | Formula Karts Special Edition

"Kart Blanche"

"kart blanche"



Take the innocent delights of the **dodgems**, add on **hi-octane thrills**, then slap the whole shebang on a Grand Prix track. Welcome to the **ickie-cars-with-attitude** world of **Formula Karts**

As a brief peek at the competition for *Formula Karts* attests, it appears that as long as Telstar release a halfway decent title, they'll have the virtual karting market sewn up. When your only rival is the raff Ayrton Senna's *Kart Duel*, it's pretty much odds on that you'll shift a few of those all-important units come Yuletide. Mercifully the bods over at Manic Media haven't been taking things too easy, and *Formula Karts* is by far the best of the developers' three karting games.

A bit of background then. The main thing that distinguishes kart

racing from car racing is the ultra-compact track design. Attempt any of these babies in a Formula One car and you'd spend most of the time smashing into walls or trundling round the track like a Prozac addled tortoise. Jump into a kart, however, and you get a somewhat different race. Bounce off walls, play dodgems with your opponents, keep that foot jammed down *hard*... Kart racing is a no-brakes revfest that would fill Jeremy Clarkson's trousers at a hundred paces and generally make *Micro Machines* look like a game for blouses.

Thus, to replicate the karting experience on the PlayStation, you simply must simulate the speed of the real thing - and that means a competent graphics engine. Unfortunately while *Formula Karts* sprints along in one-player mode, things aren't too groovy on the split-screen, two-player option. The engine chugs away as it valiantly attempts to replicate thousands of polygons, but thankfully it's a problem which Telstar assure us is being sorted.

One thing that appears to be sorted, though, is the gameplay. Three modes of play - championship, arcade or single race - are on offer and with a plethora of power-ups, speed boosts and even traction devices for navigating the more hairpin of



Call us pessimistic but the prospect of a multi-kart pile-up looks a distinct possibility...

turns, *Formula Karts* is no run-of-the-mill racing game. From the Japanese technoscape to the sweeping fields of the UK circuit, each of the nine courses offers a more-than-satisfying challenge and - kudos to the developers here - the tracks have been made as short as possible to compound as much tension into the game. It makes *Formula Karts* a zillion times more intensive than other racing games, especially when you realise you've only got 2.7 nano seconds to overtake half the field and take the chequered flag.

Tenser-than-thou gameplay, the compulsiveness associated with all racing games plus, if Manic Media get their fingers out, the graphical intensity this suicidal occupation truly deserves. Add 'em together and Telstar might just have one of the surprise hits of Christmas 1997 on their hands. Find out with PSM's review next month.



FORMULA KARTS



FEB 3



Formula Karts might not sport the most intricate graphics but when you're moving at 70mph, who cares? Exactly.

PUBLISHER: Telstar ■ RELEASE DATE: Out now
DEVELOPER: Manic Media Productions ■ ORIGIN: UK ■ STYLE: Two

Kart racing game

backissues

Every month the **Official UK PlayStation Magazine** covers
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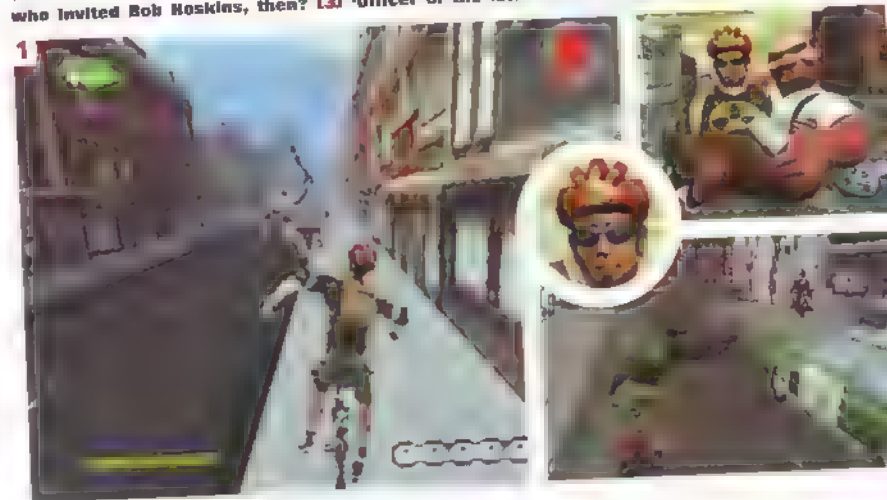
PrePlay | Courier Crisis

Chain Mail

Kill a pizza boy! Smash up a Volvo! Leave tyre marks all over a bench and feel dead good about it! You are a **bicycle messenger with attitude** and this is your mission...

Cycle couriers. WD40 snuffing emblems of Beelzebub or eco-friendly warriors greasing the cogs of the information superhighway? Whatever your opinion, there's no avoiding the Lycra-clad creatures these days, so why not dig rise them, equip them with funky GT mountain bikes and slap them in a 3D metropolis where to complete any delivery requires much riding-too-fast action, auto destruction and random violence against grannies, pimps and the Old Bill? *Courier Crisis*: Four wheels good, two wheels bad. *Courier* is guaranteed to peak the interest of the more wizened gamer with its Paper Boy stylings. Boasting 30 cartilage-crunching levels of arcade action, your mission is to bike around a sprawling 3D cityscape delivering packages from suit to suit. The games zoned off into five levels: Civic Centre, Chinatown, Waterfront, Industria and Skid Row, replete with winos and

(1) What our friends on *Total Bike* mag call Chicken Wing Ollie To Businessman's Nuts. (2) So who invited Bob Hoskins, then? (3) 'Officer of the law or not, taste my gesticular venom!'



drive by shootings – and not only are there 250 missions to attempt, but there's a set time limit for deliveries. Once you've picked up that package, follow the arrow and compass to locate your destination – normally a city-slicker with a dollar sign above his head who greets you with a cheery 'considering you're a sack-jawed knucklehead, I'm impressed.' Charming. Tarts up for the Nineties or not, *Courier* plays like an old school game – not bad to begin with and then a bit naff. Thankfully, the coolest thing about it is not getting from Bloke

A to Bloke B but what you can get up to in between. Some deft button prodding will have your courier pulling mid-air 360s and all manner of veiled gymnastics. Top stuff – especially as you bunnyhop from police car to old lady's face. But *Courier*'s real appeal is, unsurprisingly, its gratuitous violence. Whether aiming a punch to a pizza boy's stomach, or landing an elbow in a construction worker's thorax, *Courier* is both catharsis for any hassled city cyclist and quite possibly the nearest some of us have got to physical exercise since 1974.

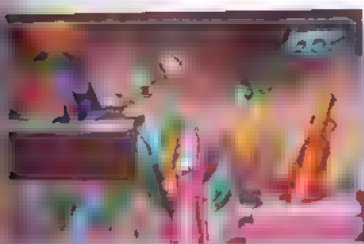


Have you noticed how neither of these renders shows a chuffed courier with a happy grin after a successful day's couriership?



■ PUBLISHER:	BMG	■ RELEASE DATE:	November	■ PLAYERS:	One
■ DEVELOPER:	New Level Software	■ ORIGIN:	United States	■ STYLE:	Bike 'em up

RAYMAN JUST TURNED PLATINUM!



RAYMAN

Ubi Soft

There's never been a platform game like it. When Rayman came out in 1995, it scored more than 90% from all the main magazines and raced to the top of the charts. Now Rayman's back on the PlayStation in a new budget priced Platinum version. Miss it and turn green.

PrePlay Pandemonium 2



Like platform games? Like jesters with magic wands? Like bouncing around a 3D world crammed with mutant fish, electric bridges and giant lava lamps? Believe us, you will.

Thankfully, *Pandy 2* refuses to just rest on its graphical laurels. Gameplay-wise, this baby is tough...



First thing's first, our Nikki looks a bit different this time but she's the boyish crop and prepubescent upper torso. Now our heroine sports a flowing main plus a set of lady bumps that could have your eye out at 15 paces. Sounds familiar? Of course it bloody does, but fret ye not - Nikki's Lara-like makeover hasn't extended to the Puckish Fargus and neither do our dynamic duo have to paddle through shark-infested caverns in search of Incan artefacts. Nope. In *Pandemonium 2* Nikki and Fargus have to thwart humanoid fishblokes, break free from ice prisons, hurdle malevolent pasma

balls and, of course, try to avoid having their retinas frazzled by a barrage of happy-pill 3D graphics. *Pandemonium 2*, then - business blissfully as usual.

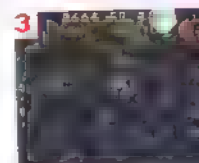
The first game, a chemically unchallenged 3D platformer with myriad camera angles plus gameplay from the gods, garnered 9/10 in *PSM14*. And a year on, this long-awaited sequel's guaranteed to follow suit.

The premise remains much the same. Bored with summoning up monsters from the Stygian depths, this time our heroes must rescue the Comet of Infinite Possibilities from the Goon Queen Zorrscha's evil hoards and, as Sid our narrator reveals in the FMV intro, much nasty stuff lurketh in the ensuing 20-plus levels. But given that Sid is actually Fargus talking wand with a Bronx accent and undulating eyebrows, you can rest assured that those *Pandemonium* fun levels are still whacked right up to eleven.

As with the original, you can swap roles at the beginning of each level. Nikki's new found buoyancy enabling her to bounce higher than a highly-strung Space Hopper, while Fargus' forward-roll h-jinks can obliterate all manner of beasties. Whoever you pick once you're past those simple first levels you'll be addicted, as no matter how many coins you collect or keys you find, you'll plummet to your doom again and again - until you master that level, scribble down the password and the agony begins anew.

But how different - or, more pointedly, better - is it from the original? Good news - the engine's faster than before and as Nikki hooks herself on to a cliff and Fargus catapults off a spider web in pixel perfect perspective, the graphics will have you examining your Dr Pepper for stray 'herbs'. *Pandy 2* is also chocky with fresh monsters fresher threats, plus the chance to fly a Robotech-style rocket through underground mazes blasting the bejabbers out of anything that moves. Add on a level where the now mangled corridors of Fargus' mind are yours to explore at a zillion mph and, well, it's that good.

But one question remains. Mind altering vegetation? Dodgy coated Smarties? Tantric magic from the Planet Bonkers? Well, whatever it is Crystal are on - we'd like some.



(1) And that is one looong way down... The Chinese New Year was celebrated with much gusto. (2) Is where we attempt 'bridge too far' game.

PUBLISHER:	BMG Interactive	RELEASE DATE:	November	PLAYERS:	One
DEVELOPER:	Crystal Dynamics	ORIGIN:	United States	STYLE:	2D/3D platformer



NAUGHTY DOG

**PLEASE FASTEN YOUR
SAFETY BELT.**

**YOU ARE ABOUT TO
CRASH.**



PrePlay Vs

GANG BANG

It's not often that we get to play a pugilist pimp, so when the chance arose we threw on our leopardskin coat, laced up our platform shoes and went for it



Polygon Magic, the in-house development team for THQ, have taken a different slant on the fighting game with Vs. Rather than setting it in a Far Eastern land, with warriors helibent on vengeance and slaughter, the action takes place in a modern day hive of villainy downtown LA.

You can join one of four gangs – Campus, Hoods, Street or Beach – each with four members and their own dress code, from the preppy style of the Campus members to the pimp and prostitute outfits of the Street gang. A fifth gang of payable bosses is waiting in the wings, ready to take on any fighters who conquer the other gangs.

Each combatant has a particular way of fighting, so while some use regulated styles such as tae kwon do, karate and



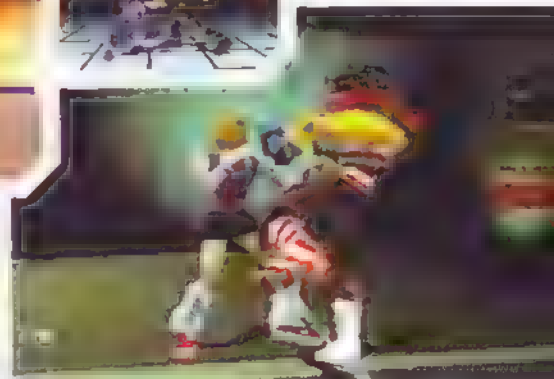
jujitsu, others rely on basic street fighting tactics to win their skirmishes. And we couldn't help but admire how authentic the moves look – it's just like watching a Jackie Chan film. The motion captured graphics, which run at a breathtaking 60 frames per second, certainly put Vs on a par with some of the best beat 'em ups in the business.

But perhaps the most unusual part of the game is the soundtrack. Dispersing with the customary grunts, slaps and punches, THQ have signed up artists from a dodgy American record label to do the in-game music. It does feel odd to have people singing in the background while you're knocking seven shades out of your fellow fighters, but strangely enough, it complements the action well.

Unfortunately it's the gameplay that raises a few questions at this

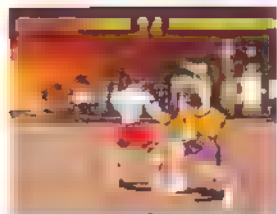


As you progress through the game you'll find increasingly aggressive moves – some are quite blood-curdling.



stage simply because so many aspects of the game mechanics have yet to be completed. By the time the developers have finished Vs they expect to have crammed in everything a gamer could wish for, including aerial and projectile attacks, grappling techniques and instant recoveries which allow you to jump straight up after you've been floored.

As it stands, Vs has the potential to be a top fighting game. We'll just hope that THQ keep their promises when we get a finished copy later this year.



Vs' advanced graphics make for superb virtual combat – whether you opt for martial art or fist fighting.



■ PUBLISHER:	THQ	■ RELEASE DATE:	January	■ PLAYERS:	One or two
■ DEVELOPER:	Polygon Magic	■ ORIGIN:	United States	■ STYLE:	3D beat 'em up



NAUGHTY DOG

CRASH BANDICOOT 2

HE'S
BACK



AND
THIS TIME
HE'S
MAD FOR IT.

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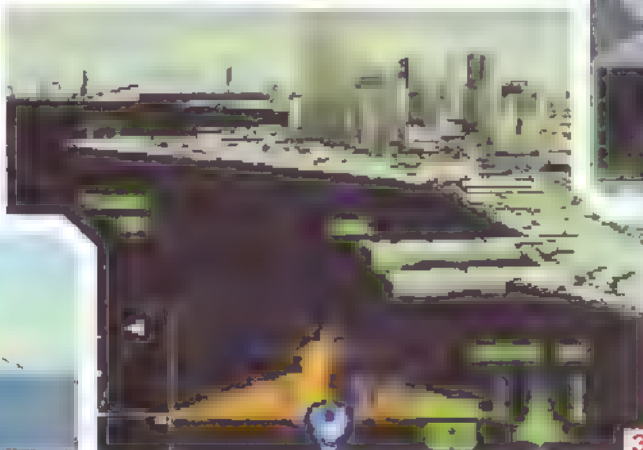


PrePlay | Ace Combat 2

air today gone tomorrow

Namco returns to the skies in a sequel to *Air Combat* that promises even more **Top Gun-style dogfighting** and a whole lot of jets...

(1) Getting annoyed by a lot of pesky enemy jets? Bomb their airfield into the ground. **(2)** The big bomber craft aren't fast, but they take a lot of punishment. **(3)** The new graphics engine is a great improvement. **(4)** The terrain is more detailed than before.



It was only a matter of time before a follow up to the successful *Air Combat* arrived, once more giving us a chance to take to the wide blue yonder in search of global peace through superior firepower.

In typical Namco style, *AC2* is a significant improvement over the original game. For a start, the graphics engine has been redesigned, and is now smoother, faster and more sumptuous than before. The early version looks simply gorgeous, with detailed terrain, realistic looking aircraft and superb effects.

In addition, the game features over 30 individual missions, each with a variety of objectives. As well as simple interception and dogfighting, there are ground attack missions, high-altitude engagements, canyon chases that look almost as good as *Independence Day*, and a variety of other types. Successful completion of each mission earns you cash with which to buy new planes. There'll be over 16 in the finished game, from the venerable Phantom through the F-15 and F-16, Stealth Fighter, and the ultra-modern F-22. Each is rated in over 12 characteristics, and all

have their own unique handling, speed, and other attributes.

Depending on your level of skill, there's a choice of two flight modes – Normal or Expert. In Normal mode, the planes are very forgiving, quick to turn and easy to fly. But for those who want the ultimate air combat experience, Expert mode offers the freedom to perform all manner of acrobatic nonsense, even if it is a bit tougher.

Throw it all together, and it looks like *Ace Combat 2* is well on the way to being another hit.



Many of the missions make great use of the new terrain models to give you stunning locations like this.

DEVELOPER	SCEE	RELEASE DATE:	November	PLAYERS:	One
PUBLISHER	Namco	ORIGIN:	Japan	STYLE:	Combat flight sim

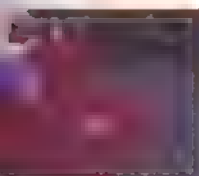
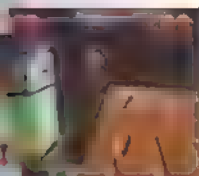
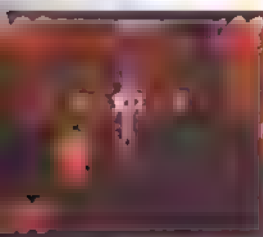


Jersey Devil | PrePlay



The demonic offspring of Sonic the Hedgehog, Batman and Keith Prodigy, bid thee welcome to the horny lil' devil who'll be flitting across a screen near you this Yuletide

AWAY! More problems for our Jersey. **(2)** Want 3D perspective? No problem for the jumping, vegetable-thumping purple fella. **(3)** Halloween V: Return of the Evil Pumpkins...



A giant step for... (2) The... 'Ginger' and... come to mind...

Life can't exactly be a bundle of laughs if you're born cursed, dark purple and sport horns and a pair of bat wings, but the Jersey Devil hasn't let such potentially girlfriend-frightening deficiencies get him down. He's done what any good mentally scarred and physically mutated chap should do and become a superhero. But oh, not just any superhero – a spring-heeled, platform-jumping puzzle-solving, baddie stomping superhero with revenge on his mind, a serious problem with pumpkins, PLUS enough chutzpah to make Mario look like the dumpy little git he truly is...

Facts first: Jersey Devil is totally ace. Magicked up by the pixies over at Malofilm, it's the first proper 3D platformer for the PlayStation. And as a zillion and one Scorsese camera

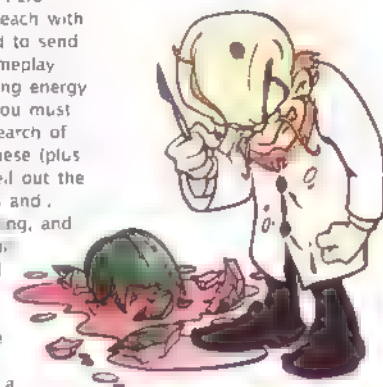
angles flit round our mpish hero, any envious glares you've cast at *Mario 64* are now officially a thing of the past. Fluid body movement (Jersey scratches his arse like a real person!), pixel perfect perspective, free roaming 3D environment... It's a propellerhead's dream, but with a brain mangling backdrop of mad scientists, malevolent turnips and homicidal baboon people, Jersey is as imaginative as it is ground-breaking.

As the bonkers cartoon intro reveals, the brief runs thus: Abandoned as a nipper, our purple pixie was duly kidnapped by Dennis Pumpkinhead for the nefarious Doctor Knarf to experiment on. Things go wrong (ie the laboratory blows up) and when the Doc resurfaces

decades later, it's up to the Jersey Devil to thwart Knarf's scheme to overrun New Jersey with mutated vegetables (don't ask). Naturally that's where you come in, with the job of steering our hero around six 3D worlds, each with 11 missions guaranteed to send you into spasms of gameplay-related ecstasy. Collecting energy pumpkins as you go, you must explore each level in search of floaty letters. Collect these (plus various power-ups), spell out the names of your enemies and... well, that would be tedious, and given this lil' beauty will be reducing your social life to almost zero in a few months time, we won't spoil the surprise just watch out for the ginger pie woman with a stomach the size of Romford...

So, just rings, jumping and stuff then, is it? Mercifully, no. Sure, the odd turnip bloke can be defeated with a deft jump/punch combination from Jersey's 20 moves, but usually it's puzzle-solving time before you can complete any level. Crates must be positioned ladder-like to reach windows, see-saw girders must be wobbled upon, and while you can amble around the games neon-and-noir playground to your heart's content, it's Jersey's more cerebral stylings that'll have you hurling down your joystick in frustration. And then picking it up again. And again.

Jersey Devil: One hell of a game...



(1) Even a mutant pixie needs a break sometimes. **(2)** Just look at the view on that...

PUBLISHER:

Ocean

RELEASE DATE:

November

PLAYERS:

One

DEVELOPER:

Malofilm Interactive

ORIGIN:

UK

STYLE:

Platform game



Drive around a dirt track very fast! Turn your friends into roadkill! Get all giddy because the perspective makes your stomach somersault! It's *Supersonic Racers 2XS*...

Urefutable Fact Of Life #627: Crashng cars is fun. Cutting up grannies on the M25 is as fun, while pegging t'round your local shopping precinct like Charlton Heston in *Ben Hur* is really, *really* fun – especially if you've spot-welded spikes on to your hubcaps. We know this, you know this, but unfortunately Johnny Rozzer also knows this, so praise be to the High Priest of Carnage that Mindscape and Supersonic Software have teamed up once more for *Supersonic Racers 2XS*. 32 undercarriage mang'ng levels of 3D rac'ng madness, guaranteed to satisfy the ram raider in your soul.

Whether it's swamp, jungle, motorway or, um, Wild West, you or up to eight of your mates (in Multi-Tap madness) can peg it round 3D courses that would necessitate a change of trousers for even the most hardened



off roader. Each track boasts simulated weather (snow, rain, etc) to make conditions even more life-threatening, and as the camera pans impressively around to reveal your no-brakes approach to a hairpin bend, there's a so the promise of underwater mines, rollercoaster conveyor belts and (of course) floating bridges to transform a gentle Sunday's drive into the rally race of your worse nightmares. Just as well the other computerised drivers aren't programmed to adapt to your driving as the game progresses. They are? Bugger.

Thankfully, Supersonic haven't just rested on their laurels for this sequel. Each fully mode'd raceworld is not only flooded with ultra-data'd SFX (from headlight glare to dragster afterburn) but comes with enough Secret Play modes to

[1] Now, is it me or does that bridge look a touch dodgy?
[2] More Crash than *Driving Miss Daisy*, *Supersonic Racers 2XS* boasts many a hairpin turn. Happy landings...



thwart the most hardened PlayStation racer. But for all the turbo levels and multiple vehicles (orry, dragster, snowmobile, submarine...), one thing remains: one deft swerve and you can transform your best mate into a potential Wil E Coyote. To win the Time Trial option, you must race a screen ahead of your opponent or, better still, send him plummeting to his doom. And for all *SR2XS*'s graphical showiness, it's this simple yet effective feature that brings out the motorway gladiator in us all and will have you sporting thumb splints within a fortnight.

Now you must excuse us. We've got an Austin Allegro to customise..



Recommended Move: Turn in mid-air and send your best pal to his doom.



PUBLISHER: Mindscape **RELEASE DATE:** Late November **PLAYERS:** One to eight
DEVELOPER: Supersonic Software **ORIGIN:** UK **STYLE:** Racing

CANE IT ON YOUR SOFA

Codemasters 

www.TouringCar.com

21st November 1997

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What the Deuce?

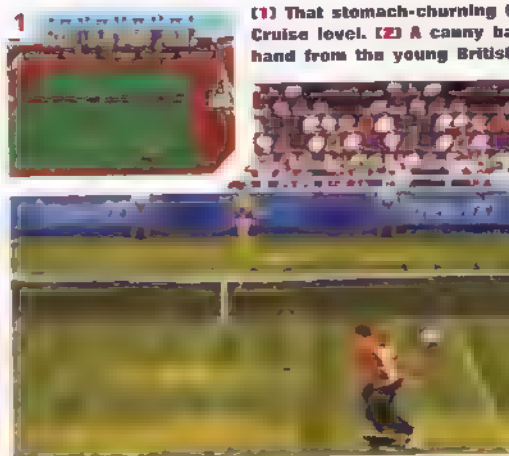
Fancy displaying your lobbing skills in the Pyramids while dressed as a Sumo wrestler? Or what about playing a Spice Girl in the Parthenon? Ubisoft: you cannot be serious!

For the most exquisite of moments, the ball is stationary. Racquet sublimely cocked, the ensuing swing brings bat into perfect synergy with a ball that is now pegging it towards the other end of the court at something approaching MACH Twelve. The service is strong, the service is true, but according to Mrs Umpire the service is also out. You cannot be serious? Why? Rendered pixel dust, my friend...

Yup, transporting the tactile delights of tennis on to the PlayStation is a tough proposition. But as Namco's super-cute *Smash Tennis* proved (6/10, PSM14), as long as the gameplay's up to par and you can smack seven shades of doxy stuff out of a little yellow ball, you can't go too far wrong. Thankfully, there's also

more to *Tennis Arena* than that. The game boasts 10 mot on captured players with which to begin your march to virtual Wimbledon, from the 'accurate' William Lee Chan to the 'consistent' Zoe Taylor. Start off by practising your strokes in 'Smash Tennis' exhibition mode before progressing on to 'World Tour' – a globe-trotting, seed-based competition where you must pummel your opponents into so much chalk dust while you trek from New York to Egypt to any one of the six featured courts. Mercifully, you can save your tour using a memory card, but the real bonus of the World Tour is that it shows just how, well, bloody different a sports sim *Tennis Arena* can be.

While the accent's on realism thanks to umpire announcements, 3D graphics and motion capture (players mop their brows and hurl down their racquets like the Ilie Nastase of old), *Tennis Arena*'s key difference is the beat 'em up stylings they've added. Rather than approximate real-life players à la *ISS Pro*, Ubisoft have coded up a cast that includes a sumo wrestler, Courtney Love, a reject from the Beastie Boys and (apparently) copious 'feisty Spice Girls look-a-likes'. Tricky arenas (the Ocean Cruise court undulates as its afloat), secret players plus



(1) That stomach-churning Ocean Cruise level. (2) A canny ball-hand from the young British

special moves (Talia Zadawi's 'Super Floating Racquet Technique' anyone?) add to the beat 'em up vibe and if the intent on is simply to be different, then it's more than worked. As for what it's added to the gameplay? Well, with a Mutt Tap link-up, *Tennis Arena* plays as fast and furious as any multiplayer sports sim but with only four main shots, some quick-quick-slow animation and the game's apparent ability to grant you aces on a whim, to extract the best out of this sports sim is going to take some serious clicking. After you with the barley water.



Different players, different courts, different views, different scores...

■ PUBLISHER: Ubisoft Entertainment ■ RELEASE DATE: November ■ PLAYERS: One to four
 ■ DEVELOPER: Smart Dog ■ ORIGIN: UK ■ STYLE: Sports sim

FREE

Road to the World Cup

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MY BROTHER
WENT TO
VICTORIAN LONDON
AND ALL HE
BROUGHT BACK
WAS THIS LOUSY
TEE SHIRT.



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TOTAL FOOTBALL

THE ULTIMATE FANS' MAG

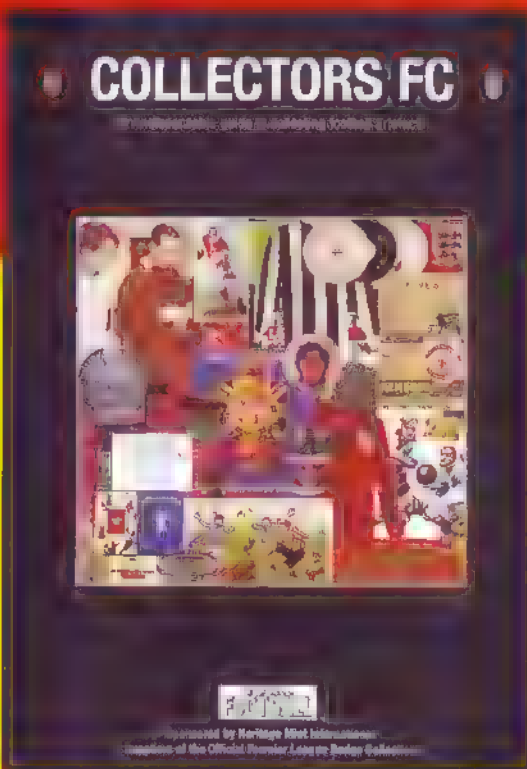
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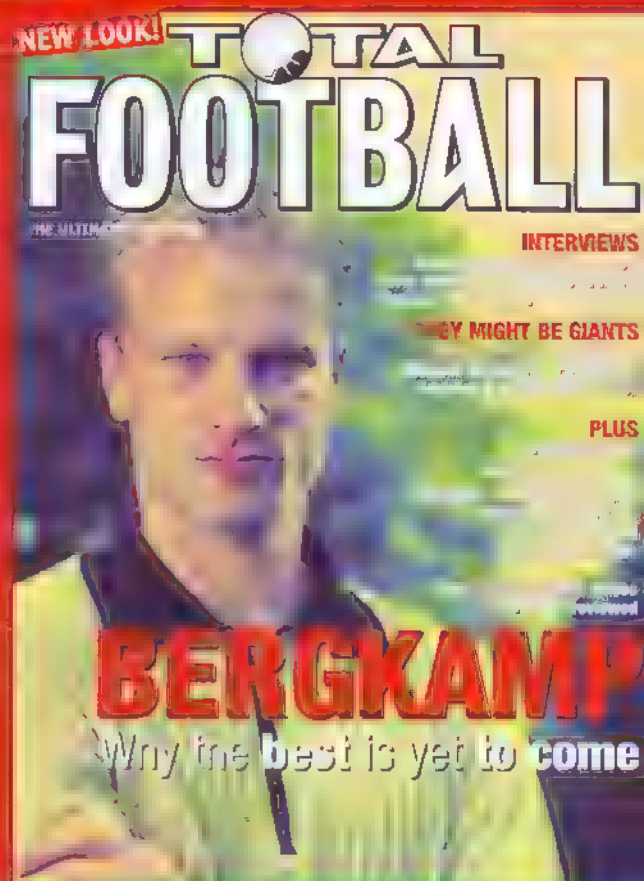
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Competition

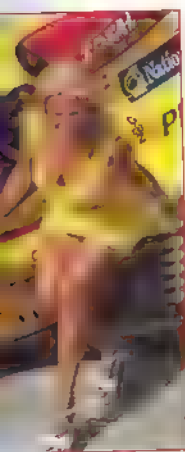


WINN



You could be the owner of a huge television worth an absolutely stupid amount of money, as well as walking off with some excellent Formula 1 merchandising...





By now you've probably read the review, played the demo and, perhaps, even bought the game. And if you have, you'll know what a stunning achievement Psygnosis has realised in actually improving a game which was already arguably the best racing sim in existence. Now, we can offer you the chance to view that improved graphics engine on the best possible screen, and hear Murray Walker's commentary on the greatest speakers ever to appear on a television. Sony's latest flat-screen Trinitron TV is worth almost £3,000 - and we have one to give away along with some special limited-edition copies of the game and a load of F1 merchandising. Simply answer the questions below, send your answers to us, and you could have three grand's worth of technology sat in your front room.



First prize: a television worth over two and a half thousand pounds. Yes, it's Sony's KV32FD1 flat TV has a flat tempered glass screen which ensures a pin sharp image without any distortion, and retails at an incredible £2799.99.

Second prize: a limited edition Formula 1 game set, the limited edition F1 '97 game and Melinda Messenger poster.

Third prize: an F1 scalextric set, the limited edition F1 '97 game and Melinda Messenger poster.

For five runners up...

The rules

As normal in these competitions, no correspondence will be entered into with regard to the final result. The editor's decision is final, and answers must be on the back of a postcard or sealed envelope, or they'll be binned. Oh and no multiple entries, we're vigilant in our spotting of repeated handwriting. Please don't ring the magazine to find out the answers, either it only means next issue takes longer to hit the shelves. The winners will be notified in due course. But you've got to be in it to win it, so send your answers to: F1 Compo, Official UK PlayStation Magazine, Future Publishing, 30 Monmouth Street, Bath, BA1 2BW.

The questions

1. Who is Jacques Villeneuve's team mate at Williams?
2. What make of engine do team McLaren drive?
3. Who is Murray Walker's co-commentator?
4. In which country is the Interlagos course?
5. Who is the current Formula 1 world Champion?



THE WINTER DISC

Christmas is coming and the games shelves are getting fat. Chances are that **you only want one turkey** this yuletide, though, so here's the **complete guide to what's happening on the games front this winter.**

As the year draws to a close, **the clamour for your cash** starts to snowball – so be a wise man and let us at **PSM** be the bright star which guides you in your game search...

**OF OUR
NTENTS**

SCEE

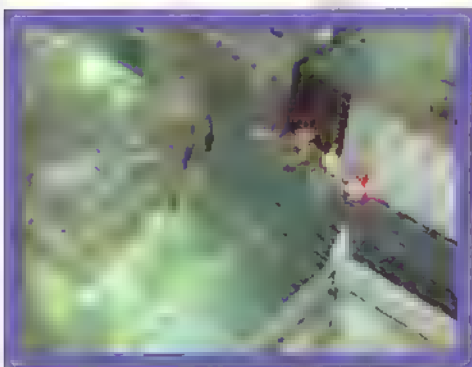
Final Fantasy VII

Style: RPG

Developer: SquareSoft

Release date: November '97

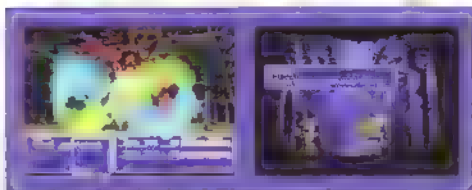
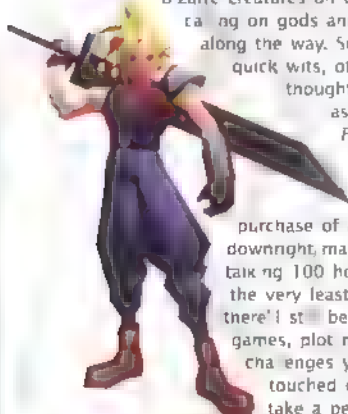
PSM stage: PlayTest plus rolling demo this issue



As the 5,000,000 Japanese PlayStation owners who've already bought *Final Fantasy VII* will attest, Blighty fans are in for a bit of a treat when SquareSoft's epic RPG hits these shores. Packaged as a three-CD extravaganza, *FFVII* is a blissful blend of FMV graphics, none more challenging gameplay and, most importantly, the imagination that will differentiate it from those now overly familiar *Dungeon Master* clones. Take control of head honcho Cloud as your motley crew of

adventurers must overcome hundreds of bizarre creatures on the road to victory, relying on gods and beasts to help along the way. Some sections require quick wits, others the tactical thought more readily

associated with the *Final Fantasy* series, but a ways *FFVII* will delight, mystify and make the purchase of a memory card downright mandatory. See, we're talking 100 hours of gameplay at the very least and even then there'll still be countless sub-games, plot nuances plus fresh challenges you won't even have touched on. In the meantime take a peek at PSM's exclusive review on page 118



Crash Bandicoot 2

Style: Platform game

Developer: Naughty Dog

Release date: November '97

PSM stage: PrePlay PSM25

Problem - how do you follow an original that became one of THE standard bearers for the PlayStation? Developed by Naughty Dog, *Crash Bandicoot's* comprehensive mash of platform hijinks and animated insanity made the game an essential purchase a year or so back. This time out, *Crash* is tricked by the nefarious Doc Cortex into collecting the crystals which will help him conquer the world. Does our hairy chum see through Cortex's web of lies or will he swallow the Doc's story hook, line and sinker? Well, that's up to you, but what we can reveal is you'll have one serious amount of fun doing so. Replacing the original 2D dynamic with fully texture-mapped 3D, now the



Rapid Racer

Style: Racing game

Developer: in-house

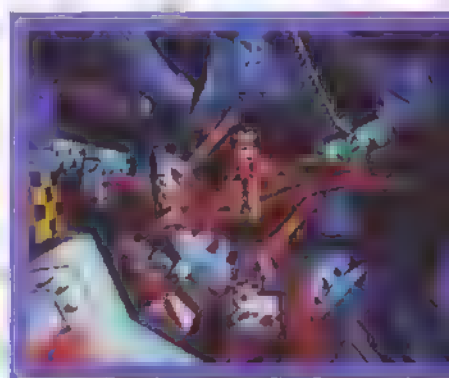
Release date: November '97

PSM stage: PlayTest PSM25 (6/10)

Fancy the idea of pegging it round a lake in a virtual speedboat, nudging your pal into the bank on the last turn where you take the chequered flag? Well, *Rapid* will satiate the desires of those vandubbers gagging for such watery action but, despite the game's jaw-dropping graphics, that's about it. None-too-realistic gameplay doesn't exactly help *Rapid's* cause and although the head-to-head combat and 256,000+ courses make this as compulsive as any racer, you'll still wish you'd saved your cash and played *Rage Racer* in the bath instead



funky furball can skate, ski and spin around this sequel's wintry setting to his furry little heart's content. Add on brand new characters, locations, plus Naughty Dog's promise of digitised speech, and come December *Crash Bandicoot 2* will still be the most fun you can have with a long-nosed marsupial in the privacy of your own home. Yup, that good



Nightmare Creature

Style: Adventure game

Developer: Kalisto

Release date: January '98

PSM stage: PlayTest PSM25 (6/10)

As settings for 3D hack 'n' slash offal-fests go, the gaslit streets of Victorian London might not sound the most likely of venues, yet with naught but cutlass and duelling pistol for protection, it is down these cobbled lanes that you must traipse for *Nightmare Creatures'* arcane bloodletting machine *Resident Evil* developed by Astar Crowley while getting down to Sepulchre and *Nightmare Creatures* will soon have you traversing our fair capital in search of slithering monsters, zombies and other such charmers - or if you read PSM25's less than complimentary PlayTest, maybe it won't...



Time Crisis

Style: Shoot 'em up

Developer: Namco

Release date: November '97

PSM stage: PrePlay PSM22



Like shooting people? Worried that the recent government ban on handguns will affect your favourite pastime? Fear not, for Namco have taken pity on your homicidal plight and transferred the mighty *Time Crisis* to a PlayStation near you. Armed with the G-Con 45 lightgun, the cut shoot 'em up has been converted with a dash of Namco's other arcade titles and thus is addictiveness in a jewel case. Cast as special agent Richard Miller, your mission is to rescue the president's daughter from the madly-named Sherudo and well, blast umpteen pounds of stinky stuff out of him that moves while you shoot. Obviously, the PlayStation can't handle the intensity of the arcade version, but with both speed and accuracy surviving the transition, plus spanking new graphics and the promise of that actually working (no *Die Hard* Trilogy-style delays here), *Time Crisis* will make a welcome bulge in the bottom of a Christmas stocking. That is, if someone babs to that. B.A.R.



Broken Sword 2

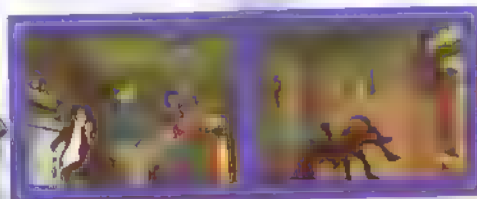
Style: Adventure game

Developer: Revolution Software

Release date: October '97

PSM stage: PrePlay PSM25 plus demo this issue

Plug-addicted archeologists, Mayan prophecies of post millennial oblivion, nasty geezers called Karzac with evil stuff on their minds... Bizarre ingredients, to be sure, but as over 300,000 copies of the original game were shifted, this is one sequel destined for many a Christmas list. Combining eye boggling graphics with a hefty dollop of puzzle solving, *BS2* improves on its predecessor not only by reducing loading time but by boosting the game's depth to create a 3D feel. Top stuff is promised and possibly a description of the game's *Smoking Mirror* subtitle. Curiouser and curiouser.



PaRappa The Rapper

Style: Simon Says

Developer: SCE Japan

Release date: Out now

PSM stage: PlayTest PSM23 (8/10)

Hands up who thought a Japanese game involving rapping dogs, coquettish sunflowers, reggae frogs and kung fu onions would turn out to be one of the funkiest games to be released on the PlayStation this year or indeed any year? Well, nobody, because there has never been anything like *PaRappa The Rapper*. An introduction then. PaRappa is a unbearably cute dog who's fallen in love with a flower called Sunny Funny. How can our hero score some botanical booty? Naturally, PaRappa must learn how to rap, drive, cook and generally get a bit Zen about the ways of his 2D world before any canine/plantlife interfacing can take place. How the hell does he do



Rosco McQueen

Style: Platform game

Developer: Slippery Snake Studio

Release date: November '97

PSM stage: PrePlay PSM24

Putting of jawbone and Gorgonzola of grin, Rosco McQueen is a fire-fighter for the post Animaniacs generation. Set ablaze by the putso Sylvester T. Square, Tower X is the heated setting for this 3D platformer and it's our hunky hero's job to trash robo baddies and quell fires on his route to the top. *London's Burning* it is not, but if you fancy *Tomb Raider*-style action with a generous amount of pyromania, grab your hose and start spraying. Kind of



this? The gameplay is of the Simple Simon variety - our hero learning his skills from a variety of would-be Yodas including instructor Moose, and (of course) MC King Kong Mushi - and while not exactly the most difficult game to master, *PaRappa* is so damn charming that you couldn't really care less. Revel in the unapologetic playfulness of PaRappa's escapades, laugh out loud at amphibians who somehow have a undiscovered aptitude for ragga and, most importantly, take what is a welcome break from the relentless retina-burn of beat 'em ups and racing games. You'll thank yourself for it.



Virgin

Street Fighter EX+α

Style: Beat 'em up

Developer: Capcom

Release date: October '97

PSM stage: PlayTest PSM25 (8/10)

Finally *Street Fighting* fans get given the chance to play their favourite martial arts game in glorious 3D. There's a plethora of new moves, combos, specials, secret characters and bosses. Inevitable comparisons to other 3D scrapfests could make or break it.



C&C: Red Alert

Style: War strategy

Developer: Westwood Studios

Release date: November '97

PSM stage: PrePlay PSM25

A complete redesign of the controls specifically with the joystick in mind, plus an option to use the Sony mouse will ensure that *Red Alert* is much more user-friendly than the original. Also, in a move which might just shift the sluggish sales of ink cables, the game can be linked so that players can take on real live human opposition. If you never played *Command & Conquer* this way, you've never played *Command & Conquer*. Added to all this excitement is the inclusion of the *Counter Strike* missions, which means that *Red Alert* might just be in the running for best-value offering on the PlayStation this Christmas.



BallBlazer

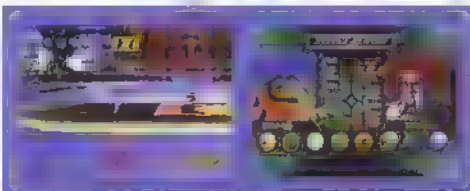
Style: Futuristic sports sim

Developer: LucasArts

Release date: November '97

PSM stage: PlayTest PSM23 (5/10)

Speed, violence, power ups, weapons and a futuristic setting are usually enough to pique the curiosity of the most battle-hardened gamer. Basically an update of the 8-bit C64 classic, *BallBlazer* attempts to give the experience that next-generation touch. Sadly, it fails.



Marvel Superheroes

Style: Beat 'em up

Developer: Capcom

Release date: November '97

PSM stage: This feature

The only game to do the Marvel licence justice said the man from Virgin. A straight conversion from the arcade machine should ensure the popularity of the game, even if two-dimensional, side-on beat 'em ups aren't everyone's can of Red Bull these days. Featuring all of the Marvel personalities, if you've got a favourite character, you'll be able to play him/her. Whether it can replace *Tekken* in our hearts is another matter.



Powerplay Hockey '98

Style: Ice hockey sim

Developer: In-house

Release date: December '97

PSM stage: PrePlay PSM24



Herc's Adventures

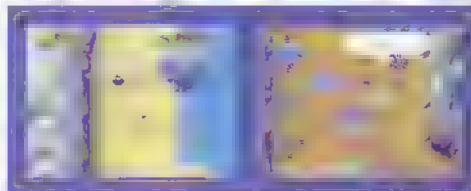
Style: Adventure game

Developer: LucasArts

Release date: November '97

PSM stage: PlayTest this issue page 108

An entertaining and simple introduction to RPGs in which you must attempt to rescue the beautiful goddess of fertility, Persephone, from the cold clutches of Hades, king of the underworld. Essentially a maze platformer with a few inspired puzzles and quirks.



Resident Evil: Director's Cut

Style: Adventure game

Developer: Capcom

Release date: November '97

PSM stage: This feature

Two different versions of *Resident Evil* reside on the CD for this cash-in. Firstly it features the Japanese version of the game, which is apparently easier, and secondly it features an updated version with new weapons, new locations, and different puzzles. 'Something for the old fans of *Resident Evil* to get their teeth into'. There's also a 20 minute playable demo of *Resident Evil 2*, featuring 20 rooms from the new game.



Much like football games, in any hockey game there are going to be trade-offs when compared to the competition. *Powerplay Hockey '98's* strengths are in the control system, the enhanced graphics, the updated stats and some new added 'bits and bobs'. Hockey fans will probably have made the right mind up, anyway, but this faces serious competition from EA's *NHL '98*.



Acclaim

Constructor

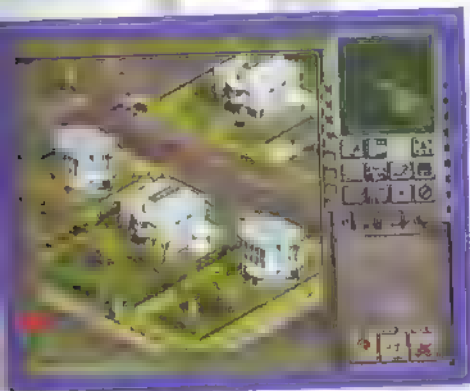
Style: Strategy game

Developer: System 3

Release date: November '97

PSM stage: This feature

Sim City meets Theme Hospital! Constructor places you in the position of a property developer whose task it is to purchase plots of land in which to build various buildings, including hospitals. Things are never that simple, though. If you are unscrupulous property developers, you will try their level best to stop you. Think of a mix of Command & Conquer and you've just about grasped what's going on. More next month.



Bust-A-Move 3

Style: Puzzle game

Developer: Taito

Release date: December '97

PSM stage: This feature

The day when all those promises about not going bust at four in the morning anymore were coming true, along comes Bust-A-Move 3 to your rescue. More single-player options and more levels have been included so that lone players will have even more time on the bubbly one. But of course, it's in two-player mode where the fun really lies. Buy this for anyone you love.



X-Men Children Of The Atom

Style: Scrolling beat 'em up

Developer: Probe

Release date: December '97

PSM stage: This feature

Another straight conversion from an arcade game, which should prove popular among arcade freaks and comics fans, although everyone else may be a little more reserved. Players can choose from all the major X-Men characters, including the ever-popular Wolverine (borderline psychotic with big metal claws), Cyclops (shoots laser beams from his eyes), Colossus (turns himself into living steel and smashes things), and many more. As you'd expect from any self-respecting 2D beat 'em up these days, there's a staggering range of vicious special moves and nasty combos, all presented in big, colourful, eye-catching graphics.



Batman And Robin

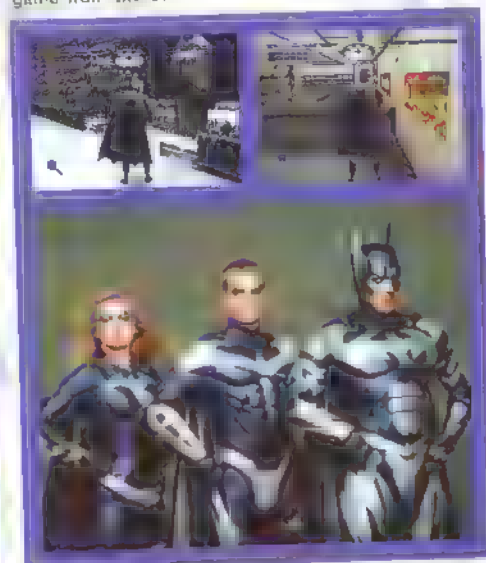
Style: Adventure game

Developer: Probe

Release date: December '97

PSM stage: This feature

Third-person 3D adventuring roughly based on the plot of the latest movie, though much less linear. Take control of Batman, Robin or Batgirl - certain areas of the game are easier to get through if the requisite character is selected. The adventuring arena is based on the proper map of Gotham City. Effectively you have the freedom to go wherever you want. The team at Probe worked closely with the makers of the film, Warner Brothers, who supplied them with up-to-date scripts, photographs, Silicon Graphics images of the vehicles and videos. And Warner have been involved with the game from the outset.



NHL Breakaway '98

Style: Ice hockey sim

Developer: Sculpture Software

Release date: December '97

PSM stage: PrePlay PSM24

The fully licensed NHL hockey game that is apparently so beautiful it puts N64 games to shame. From the same stable that brought us NBA Jam and Mortal Kombat, this could be a powerplayer among the numerous hockey sims on the market. Staff competition, though.



Psygnosis

G-Police

Style: Shoot 'em up

Developer: In-house

Release date: October '97

PSM stage: PlayTest PSM25 (9/10)

Placing the player in charge of a futuristic police helicopter, and set within the confines of futuristic city domes, *G-Police* has the strength of plot and believability that make it one of the most eagerly awaited games this side of the millennium. In all, we reckon *G-Police* will appeal to flight sim buffs, shoot 'em up addicts, *Blade Runner* fans, and anyone with a bit of imagination. The game successfully combines elements of *Syndicate Wars* and *Gunship 2000* and even old Amiga classic *Elite*. Another startling effort from Psygnosis.



Discworld 2

Style: Adventure

Developer: Classic Entertainment

Release date: November '97

PSM stage: PrePlay PSM25

Guess what this is a sequel to? That's right, the ever popular *Discworld* looks set to have as many PlayStation releases as there are books. In this instance, Death has decided to go on holiday and no one in *Discworld* is dying. Rincewind the wizard takes it on himself to persuade the Grim Reaper to come back and do his job, with hilarious consequences. Look out for a review next month.



Colony Wars

Style: Shoot 'em up

Developer: In-house

Release date: November '97

PSM stage: PlayTest this issue + page 96

The shortened paraphrased description of *Colony Wars* is 'an arcade space shoot 'em up'. But you could describe the original *Space Invaders* as such. No, this is an open-ended non-linear space adventure in which you get to play the part of a lone Star Fighter in the league of *Free Worlds*. Seventy-plus missions will ensure the plot is never short of action. And the visuals are a high-resolution, so it looks absolutely amazing. This is expected to be a major contender for the Christmas number-one spot in the charts.



Power Soccer 2

Style: Football sim

Developer: Shen Studios

Release date: December '97

PSM stage: Primal Screen this issue + page 38

Basting a brace of new stadiums, all of the international teams, updated Premier teams (once playing for Liverpool), new motion capture, an updated 3D engine, and more sensible commentary from Brian Moore, *Power Soccer 2* has undergone a massive revamp from the original. Whether it can take on the mighty *ISS Pro* will be the test of its mettle.



Overboard!

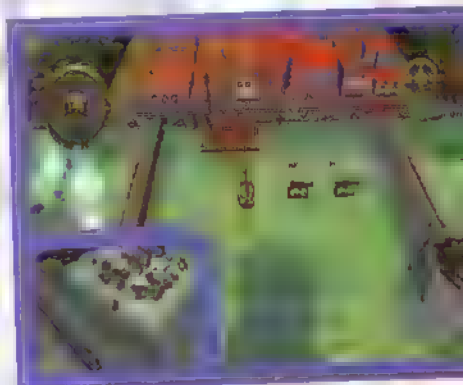
Style: Adventure

Developer: In-house

Release Date: Nov '97

PSM Stage: PlayTest and playable demo this issue

Fans of our demo discs will no doubt have been charmed by this lovely little mover. Take charge of a pirate ship, sail the seven seas, pick up power-ups, engage in sea and land battles, find treasure, and navigate twisty channels. As if not enough, players can also take on up to four other players in head to head arenas. Hailed as a breath of fresh air in a stagnant market, we believe we're legally obliged to say, 'Yo ho ho.' Psygnosis have been kind enough to supply you with a one player demo on PSM23 so you'll know all about it.



Rascal

Style: Platform game

Developer: Travellers Tales

Release date: December '97

PSM stage: Primal Screen PSM22

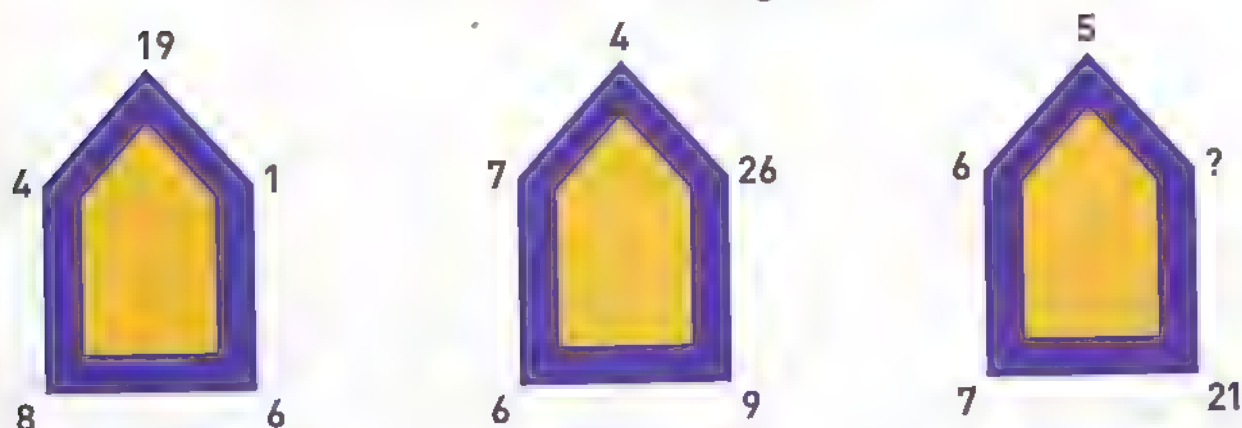
From the same people who created *Mickey Mania*, *Toy Story*, and *Sonic 3D* comes *Rascal*. A 3D platform adventure featuring a suitable central character running around a 3D hi-res world. Expected to be fast paced, verging on manic. However, perfectionist that Psygnosis is, the title looks like it won't be finished until next year. Probably the biggest rival to BMG's *Cex 2*.



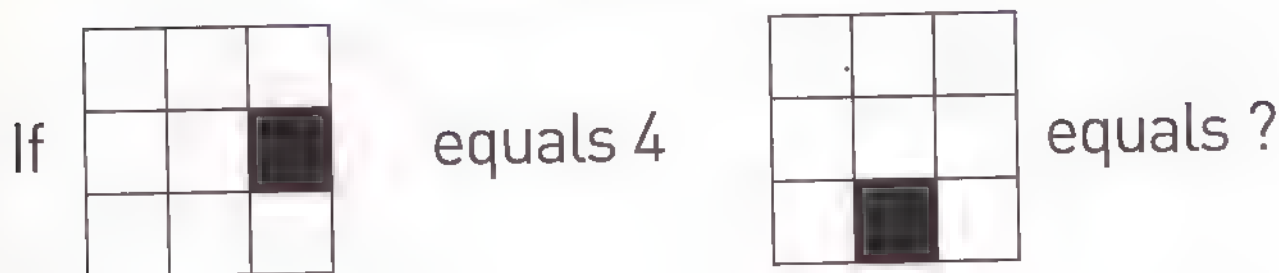
The question mark should be replaced by what number?



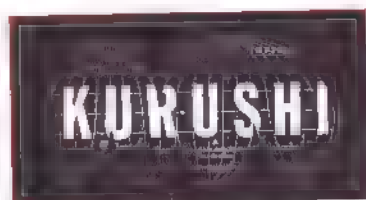
What is the missing value?



Complete the equation



IF YOU CAN SOLVE THESE PROBLEMS,
YOU'RE HALFWAY TO SOLVING



It's what your IQ's been asking for



Ocean

Jersey Devil

Style: Platform game

Developer: Malofilm Interactive

Release date: November '97

PSM stage: PrePlay PSM26

Crash Bandicoot set the benchmark for the 3D platformer with its manic characterisation, pathological speed, and adrenaline-buzzed reactions, and *Jersey Devil* hopes to follow in the same mould - only more so. Guiding Jersey through numerous traps, puzzles and tricks is the aim of the game. It's certainly the first free-roaming, 3D platformer that the PlayStation has witnessed - *Croc* didn't quite cut the mustard. And *Jersey Devil* is a massive game, with some 50 huge levels to tackle. Look out for the review next month.



Lucky Luke

Style: Platformer

Developer: Infogrames

Release Date: Nov '97

PSM Stage: PrePlay in PSM22

Lucky Luke is a cartoon cowboy who aims to charm the younger section of the PlayStation market. He doesn't really kill things or people, just sort of beats them up with weapons as inoffensive as rubber bottles and water pistols. Lucky Luke is a hybrid of a 3D platformer and a beat 'em up. As to be expected, each of the numerous levels engages Luke in puzzle solving and beating up tasks.



Dynasty Warriors

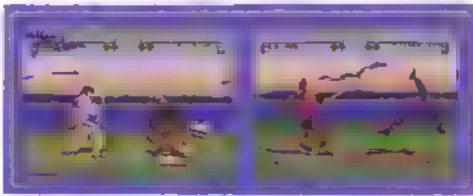
Style: Beat 'em up

Developer: Koei

Release date: November '97

PSM stage: PlayTest PSM24 (8/10)

'M'ore like *Tekken 2* than anything else', claimed the man from Ocean. Not quite, but this is an excellent, if slightly obscure beat 'em up from Koei in Japan. The game was signed up by Ocean after the company saw it at the recent E3 show in Atlanta. It's a 3D polygonal basher with weapons in the *Soul Blade* tradition, and a neat enough title to boot. A difficult genre to compete in, though.



Megaman Battle & Chase

Style: Racing game

Developer: Capcom

Release date: November '97

PSM stage: PlayTest PSM25 (3/10)

Megaman 8

Style: Platformer

Developer: Capcom

Release date: November '97

PSM stage: PlayTest PSM25 (3/10)

Super Pang Collection

Style: Retro collection

Developer: Capcom

Release date: November '97

PSM stage: PlayTest PSM24 (6/10)

Hubble, bubble, toil and trouble, said Mr Capcom when the codehouse first brewed this seminal arcade classic. Retro fans and potential fans should warm to this collection of old arcade games. No 'must have' title, but playable enough.

Matchday 3

Style: Football sim

Developer: Cranberry Sauce

Release date: November '97

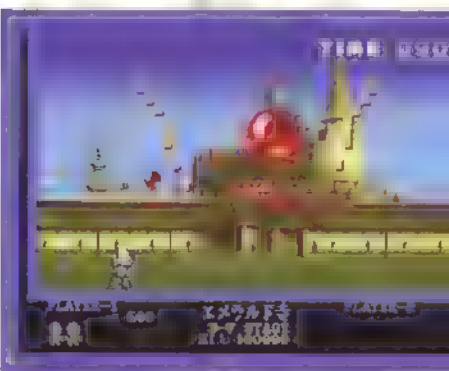
PSM stage: This feature

Billed as having the depth of the *Matchday* series of football games, this sequel promises to be one of the toughest soccer games around. 'When you score a goal, it really feels like an achievement', said a man from Sauce. Whether that means that it's virtually impossible to score remains to be seen. With the *Matchday* label attached, you got to sit up and take notice, though.



Thagine *Street Racer* taking on Megaman and the *Megaman* characters in a straight fight, and the *Megaman* crew taking over the cars and customising them to their own design. That's what this is like. The aim of the game is to win races and steal weapons from opponents. Hmm.

Two-dimensionsal platformer in which our eponymous Japanese hero has to save the earth from the villainous Doctor Wiley's plan to exploit a fallen meteor to take over Earth. This is based on a true story which was documented on *UK Living*. Honest. We can only assume that *Megaman* triumphed.



Gremlin

Actua Soccer 2

Style: Football sim

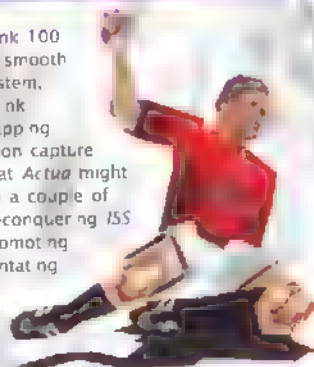
Developer: In-house

Release date: November '97

PSM stage: PrePlay PSM25



Think hi-res! Think 100 per cent, super-smooth new control system. Think sequel! Think ed texture mapping improved motion capture ogy! Think that Actua might be able to score a couple of against the all-conquering ISS in Shearer promoting vies commentat ng n ng team best news es has 4D speed



Actua Ice Hockey

Style: Ice hockey sim

Developer: In-house

Release date: December '97

PSM stage: Preplay PSM22

The capture of the Winter Olympics licence means that all the teams are based on the real international teams. Unusually for ice hockey games, Gremlin's famed motion capture set up has been used to capture the main moves of ice hockey players – difficult, considering the complexity. Whether this hinders or aids the gameplay, we shall find out in a future issue. Slide away



Actua Golf 2

Style: Golf sim

Developer: In-house

Release date: October '97

PSM stage: PlayTest PSM22 (7/10)

If you got hold of PSM23, then you couldn't fail to have noticed the rather splendid demo of this title on our cover disc. If you hadn't then it wouldn't take the brains of Magnus Magnusson to work out that this is a revamped and updated version of the original Actua Golf... but its commentary is the BEST ever



Actua Tennis

Style: Tennis sim

Developer: In-house

Release date: December '97

PSM stage: PrePlay next issue

The sooner someone buys up the BBC Wimbledon archives and gets Dan Maskill commentating on a tennis sim, the better. Sounds a bit like The Crow with Brandon Lee, but at least it would score top kudos points. Meanwhile, Gremlin's offering to the tennis sports genre looks as if it's capable of serving a few aces on the opposition. Delayed service, though.



Judge Dredd

Style: Shoot 'em up

Developer: In-house

Release date: November '97

PSM stage: Primal Screen PSM25

A three-dimensional shoot 'em up that takes place within the confines of Mega City One. You play the part of the eponymous character and find yourself having to shoot as many baddies as possible. Designed to exploit the up and coming lightgun from SCEE, comparisons to the likes of Virtua Cop and Lethal Enforcers are bound to be made



Electronic Arts

Croc

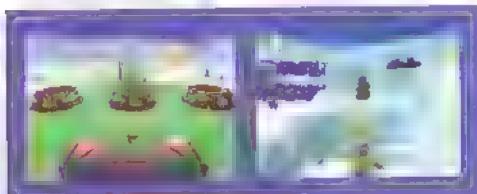
Style: 3D platform adventure

Developer: Argonaut

Release date: October '97

PSM stage: PlayTest PSM25 (7/10)

Croc claims that it takes the essence of 2D platformer classics like *Yoshi's Island* and places them in a much more controllable, realistic and accessible 3D environment. Aiming to give *Crash Bandicoot* and *Mario* a run for their money, this smooth-looking platformer offers more than 50 enemies and 200 levels. But while it's a very competent game, it doesn't quite hit the mark in terms of challenging the player.



Moto Racer

Style: Motorcycle racer

Developer: In-house

Release date: December '97

PSM stage: PlayTest this issue p110

Widely hailed by PC gamers as the best racing game on the platform. Made all the sweeter due to the fact that *Moto Racer* features bikes and is effectively two games in one. Why? There are road racing sections and Enduro racing sections. Add to that the realistic handling dynamics, and you've got the motorbike version of *F1*.



Nuclear Strike

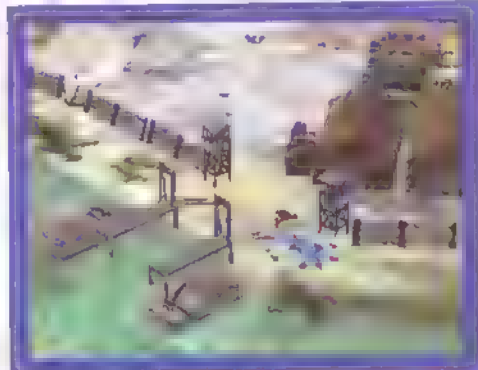
Style: Helicopter sim

Developer: In-house

Release date: October '97

PSM stage: PlayTest PSM24 (7/10)

We were hoping that this would be called *EastEnders Strike*, where you got to fly around Albert Square and shoot anything and anybody that moved. But, alas and alas, it wasn't to be. As if to make amends, the latest in the popular series lets you take control of more than an attack helicopter. To successfully complete missions, you have to drive tanks, boats, planes and other helicopters. A little bit more of the same.



Populous 3

Style: Strategy game

Developer: Bullfrog

Release date: December '97

PSM stage: This feature

Populous was the great grand-daddy and originator of the God sim. PlayStation-owning *Populous* fans can rejoice that the sequel to the sequel of the original, so to speak, is coming to their favourite console. Boasting an Artificial Intelligence system that makes previous *Populous* incarnations look positively thick, *Populous 3* must rank among the favourites to be a smash this Christmas. And judging by the letters we receive, it's a title that the PlayStation is crying out for.



Elite

KPH

Style: Driving game

Developer: In-house

Release date: November '97

PSM stage: This feature

With the number of driving games appearing on the PlayStation, you sometimes wonder if anyone out there is getting a sense of déjà vu about Atari and the late Seventies crash of the videogame market. *KPH's* influences appear to be *Mario Kart* and *Chase HQ*. As competition in the field is as stiff as Wolverine on heat, we're reserving judgement until we get a good look in. The title haven't quite finalised the name – more news.



Hybrid

Style: First-person shoot 'em up

Developer: In-house

Release date: November '97

PSM stage: This feature

A corridor-based shoot 'em up in the *Doom* scheme of things, *Hybrid* boasts a Command Event System which basically means that certain actions or non actions will have inevitable consequences. Although we remain sceptical about these systems, we're prepared to give the game the benefit of the doubt. As for the CES, *Hybrid* also offers the choice of four different characters and 24 different weapons with which to wage war on your enemy. Look out for a preview next month.



Pandemonium 2

Style: Platform game

Developer: Crysta Dynamics

Release date: December '97

PSM stage: PrePlay this issue - page 54

One of the top-ranking releases last year, and it was easy to see why. In order to improve and throw down the gauntlet of a new challenge, *Pandemonium 2* promises enhanced characters with new moves and new styles of attacks, a dynamic freestyle 3D camera, and a double heavy drum jungle techno soundtrack. As if that wasn't enough, there'll be bonuses and secret rooms galore.



Courier Crisis

Style: Paperboy for the '90s

Developer: New Level Software

Release date: December '97

PSM stage: PrePlay this issue - page 52

Based roughly on arcade, console, and computer game classic *Paperboy*, *Courier Crisis* should be one of those games that can make use of the next-generation power offered by the PlayStation. More variety is promised in the moves and stunts that the bicycle courier can pull off to aid him in his all-important quest to deliver as many packages on time as possible.



Grand Theft Auto

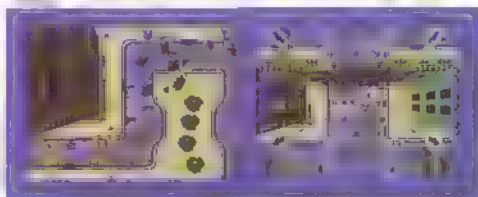
Style: Top-down racing adventure

Developer: DMA

Release date: November '97

PSM stage: PrePlay PSM25

There's a maxim that as long as they spell your name properly, there is no such thing as bad press. If this is true, then you can't refute that DMA has already scored 10 out of 10 with *GTA*. Apparently this game is going to corrupt your morals and turn you into a state-of-the-art sociopath. The sooner the better, we say. Roll on November... Murderous times await.



Eidos Interactive

Tomb Raider 2

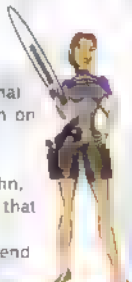
Style: Adventure game

Developer: Core Design

Release date: November '97

PSM stage: PlayTest this issue - page 86

Doing for the 'gender wars' what Jackie Chan did for the film noir, Lara Croft makes her much-awaited return in the sequel to the original. As a limited edition Versace wardrobe and a new soundtrack (what might have been, had the poor soul not been mourned by Elton John), meanwhile gamers can chew on the fact that an improved level editor means that the development team have more time to spend on the gameplay elements.



Deathtrap Dungeon

Style: Adventure game

Developer: Eidos

Release date: October '97

PSM stage: PrePlay PSM23

When *Dungeons & Dragons* was beginning to make a meaningful impact in Britain, the ZX81 was on the cutting edge of home-computing technology. Then, if you wanted to ramp solo round a dungeon you had to invest in an Alan Livingston interactive fantasy book to get your kicks. Projections were made that one day you could do all of this with your computer in a real live three-dimensional environment. Those days are here now, and whether or not *Deathtrap Dungeon* transfers as well as it should is going to be one of those questions that sets the funny dice set rolling.



Fighting Force

Style: Beat 'em up adventure

Developer: Core Design

Release date: Nov '97

PSM stage: PrePlay PSM24

Is it or isn't it? Will it or won't it? The first question, of course, is does this 3D beat 'em up use motion capture? The answer is no. Will it make a difference? We don't know yet. We do know that it'll make many of the fighters look as if they need to go to the toilet, or be in need of some laxatives. However, the interactive background and use of improvised weapons might just help you to avoid a mild attack of the giggles. Promising.



THQ

WCW Vs The World

Style: Wrestling game

Developer: Asmik

Release date: October '97

PSM stage: PlayTest PSM20 (6/10)

Poriginally featuring Japanese characters, not unsurprisingly, the game now features the main players from the WCW; 60 characters in all, 30-40 moves per character and a frame rate so fast it's obscene (40 frames per second). However despite a promising spec, it really does get rather dull and you soon find yourself achng for Tekken



Vs

Style: Beat 'em up

Developer: Asmik

Release date: December '97

PSM stage: PrePlay - page 56

Misanthropes just looking for a 3D fighting game that lacks an oriental look and feel, might find soace in Vs. Featuring teen gang-style fighters, the scenario shouts 'street' but it have to go some to topple the best



Air Race

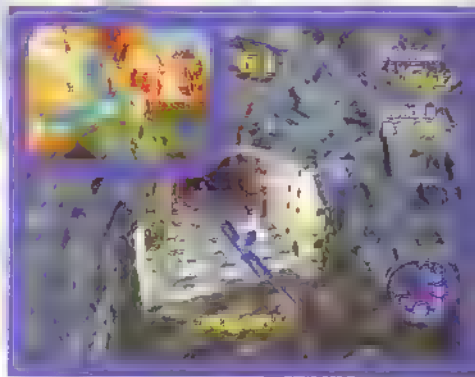
Style: Fight sim

Developer: Xing

Release date: November '97

PSM stage: PlayTest this issue - page 116

Ever wanted to find out how a bi plane would fare against a Stealth Fighter in a race? You might be surprised. Especially if the route raced over was full of twists and turns. Air Race gives participants the chance to find out for themselves. What's more, there's a split-screen mode which lets you race against a human opponent



Ubi Soft

Tennis Arena

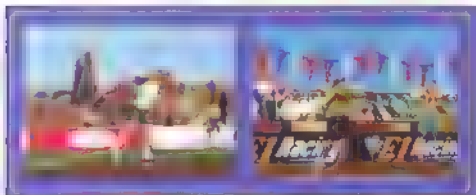
Style: Sports sim

Developer: Smart Dog

Release date: January '98

PSM stage: This feature

Tennis Arena takes the view that fun in games comes from characterisation. The quirky, cartoon players have little in common with the Boris Beckers of this world, but whether it'll be a smash hit



Mindscape

Dark Omen

Style: Strategy game

Developer: In-house

Release date: November '97

PSM stage: Prima! Screen PSM24

Based on the Warhammer games, this fantasy wargame is more campaign based than mission-based. Early, seemingly trivial mistakes can come back and haunt you. But as with all such games, it could find a niche



Codemasters

Toca Touring Cars

Style: Racing game

Developer: In house

Release date: November '97

PSM stage: PrePlay PSM25

Aain Menu is the World Touring Car champion. Did you know that? If this racer captures anything like the excitement of watching the real thing, then it could turn out to be the surprise hit of the Christmas season. Review next month



computer arts

the art, design and technology magazine

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AS LIAM AND NOEL SEEM
TO PREFER GESTURES TO WORDS,
YOU'D EXPECT THEM TO
LIKE THE STATION WITH LESS TALK.

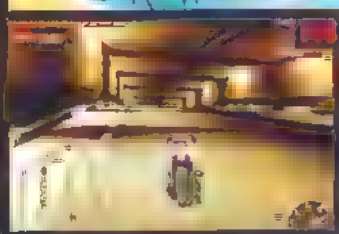


- 10** PSM is prepared to award a golden '10' to games which are perfect.
- 9** A splendid piece of software – recommended without prejudice.
- 8** Very, very good. Add it to your collection forthwith, if not sooner.
- 7** A great title with minor irritations, but still a worthy purchase.
- 6** A case of 'Why did they do that?'. Playable but with some dodgy bits.
- 5** Straight average. Unoriginal or flawed, but still worth buying – just.
- 4** Below average. Probably has some solid gameplay or lifespan flaws.
- 3** Looking pretty bad. Maybe worth borrowing for a couple of days.
- 2** Borderline crap. Technically inept, poorly structured and short-lived.
- 1** A product without merit of any sort. Not beyond human endurance.
- 0** Black coffee coaster in the shape of a CD. Dreadful, awful tat.

 Special games which we think deserve to go on your 'must buy' list are also awarded our StarPlayer logo

PlayTest

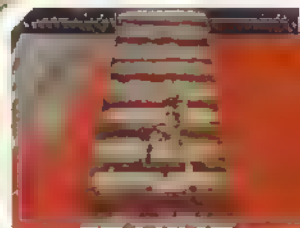
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(1) Oh yes. That'll be *Tomb Raider*, all right.
(2) Lara's now a very capable climber as well as a top-class acrobat.
(3) Look at the size of Lara's weapon there, ladies and gentlemen.
(4) It's in areas like this that you begin to appreciate the new textures that adorn *TR* and how much better they make it look.



Tomb Raider 2

Climb to the top of the nearest hill, fill your lungs with air and shout for joy. *Tomb Raider 2* has finally landed...



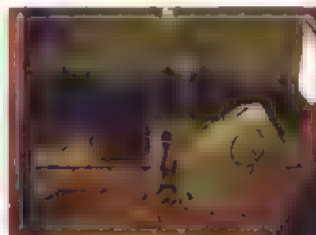
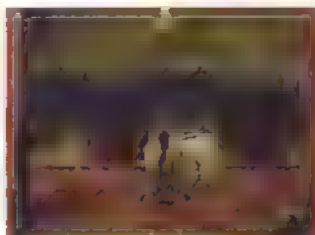
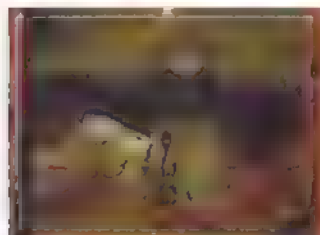
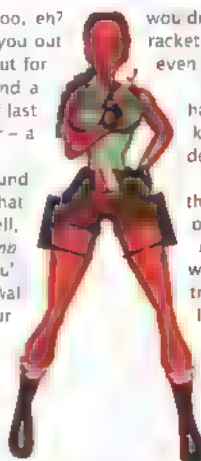
Tomb Raider 2? And about time too, eh? We don't know about the rest of you out there in magazine-reading land, but for those of us with full-time jobs and a social life it was about the end of last month that we finally finished *Tomb Raider* – a scant 11 months after its release.

Since then we've been sitting around twiddling our thumbs, sighing and wishing that Core Design would get their act together. Well, the wait is over. We've been playing *Tomb Raider 2* for a couple of weeks, and you've probably have run her around the Great Wall of China in the first level thanks to our exclusive cover disc demo by now. Unless, of course, you're reading the mag in a shop, or you're one of the strange and viduas who buys the magazine and doesn't actually own a PlayStation. (We kid you not. We've even had someone ring up and ask why the CD

wouldn't work in his hi-fi. 'It makes the most terrible racket,' he confessed.) Anyway, we digress. We can even hear the sound of you getting impatient. So...

Tomb Raider 2 is brilliant. Thank God. As you'll have seen on the demo. But you'll be wanting to know if the rest of the game is as good as the demo level? Of course it is.

Y'see, *Tomb Raider 2* is packed full of new things. Yes, it's essentially the same game as the original, but at the same time it's got so much more. Take Lara's new moves, for example. As well as all the old jumping, shimmying and running tricks that she used to be able to do, Lara has learnt some new stuff in her year off. Now she can climb. Not just up to the top of a block as she could in the original, but up ladders and climbable walls. A fairly insignificant improvement, you might think. Except that Lara's ability to climb has revolutionised the level design of the game. Areas that were ▶



The new moving obstacles make quite a difference to the levels. They also make life a damn sight harder as you attempt to avoid them crushing you. And what's that symbol, eh?



PUBLISHER:

Eidos Interactive

DEVELOPER:

Core Design

RELEASE DATE:

November

ORIGIN:

UK

PRICE:

£44.99

STYLE:

3D adventure

BABY YOU CAN DRIVE MY CAR

he's back. Exactly a year ago we reviewed a game that we proudly proclaimed was the best thing you could buy for the PlayStation. And we were right. Perhaps more significantly, it featured a main character who captured the imagination of the public in a way that no Italian plumber or blue hedgehog had before. It gave computer games their first star - Lara Croft.

A year later and her image is everywhere; the covers of top style magazines, all over the papers, on-stage with U2, even as a centrefold in *Loaded*.

Lara is Britain's biggest female screen star; she's earned more than Kristin Scott-Thomas in *The English Patient*. She's doing a single with ex-Eurythmics star Dave Stewart. She's earned admiration from gamers and sparked feminist arguments across the newspapers and radio airwaves of the world. She's big news. She's hot.



A FAST DRIVE TO FAME

With her athletic legs, wasp waist and Page Three breasts, she is a digital 'It Girl' who sets male pulses racing with her gun-toting antics. But she is also a tough, self-reliant, intelligent woman. Could there be anyone alive who can compare to this feisty virtual being? Anna Pasternak sings Lara's praises in *The Sunday Times*.

THE GUN GIRL CORRUPTING OUR CHILDREN BY COMPUTER

Can you imagine boys of 13 skipping homework to grab a few hours with Lara. She is a gun-wielding, baddle-blasting sex symbol, whose very large breasts are designed to be out of proportion with the rest of her body.' Dr Ken Parsons misses the point in the *Daily Mail*.

JAMES GOES FROM TOMB TO DOOM

Avid James blamed the three goals that he let in against Newcastle United on his addiction to videogames such as *Tomb Raider*. *The Times* blows the lid on David James' gaming habit.

WITH LARA AT HOME IT'S COOL TO BE A NERD

Lara Croft will become a figure of ridicule in 12 months and we'll all be wondering why we were so excited about her.' Miles Guttery, editor of *Total PlayStation*, demonstrates his shrewd understanding of the gaming field in *The Independent On Sunday*.

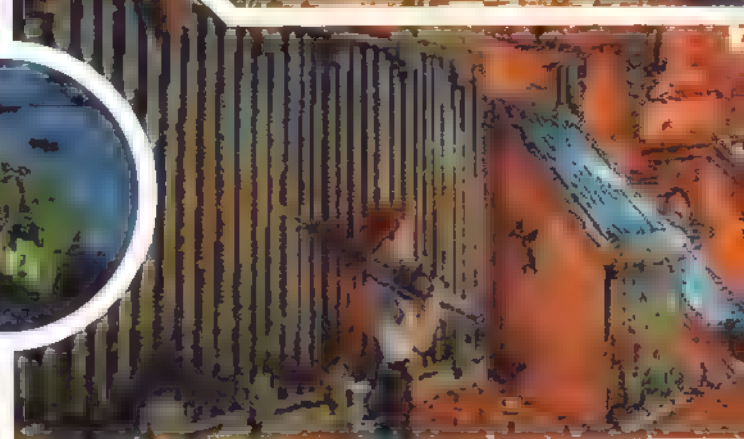
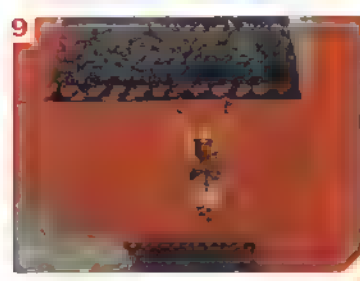
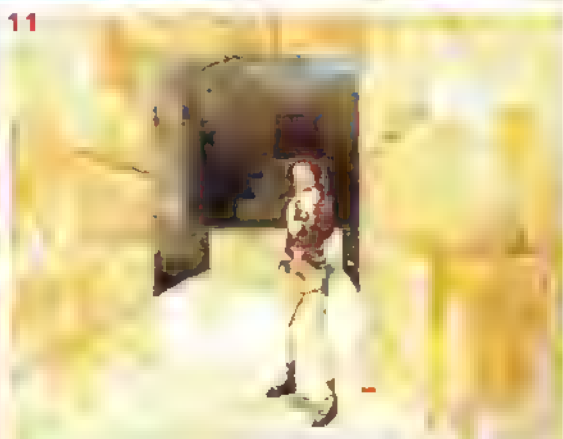
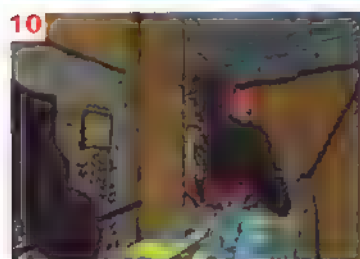
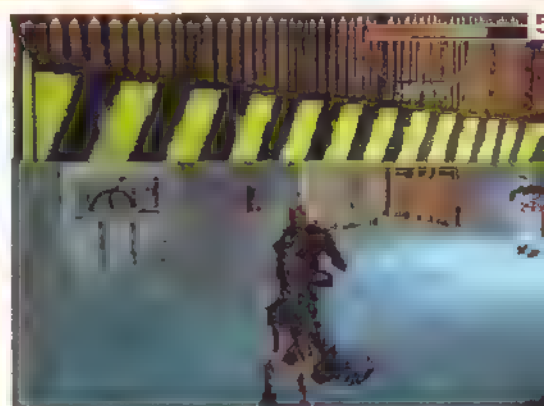
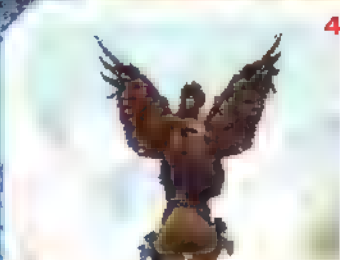
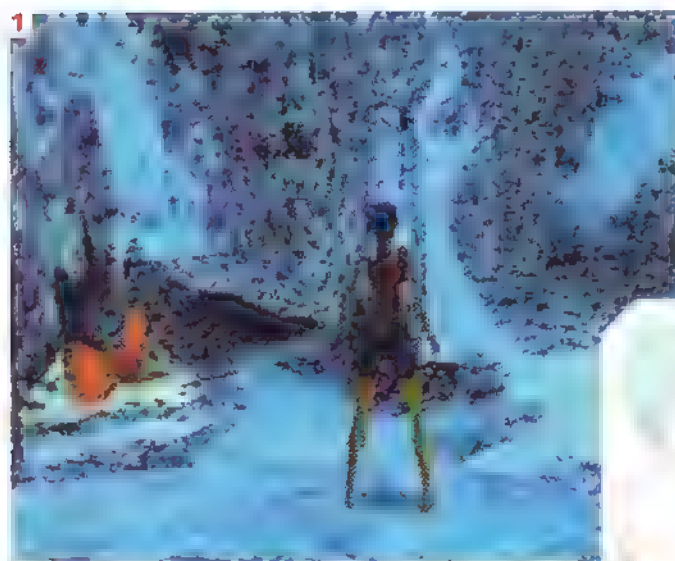
THE BIT GIRL

You rarely see her face. Occasionally, the camera angle allows you a glimpse of slanted brown eyes and luscious lips, but otherwise Lara's always out ahead, out of reach, like the perfect girl who passes in the street.' Style guru Miranda Sawyer comes over all poetical in the posur's favourite magazine, *THE FACE*.

SNIPPETS

Lara's popularity comes down to two words, and the second one is "jugs". Occasional *PSM* reviewer Stuart Campbell tells *THE FACE* what he reckons.

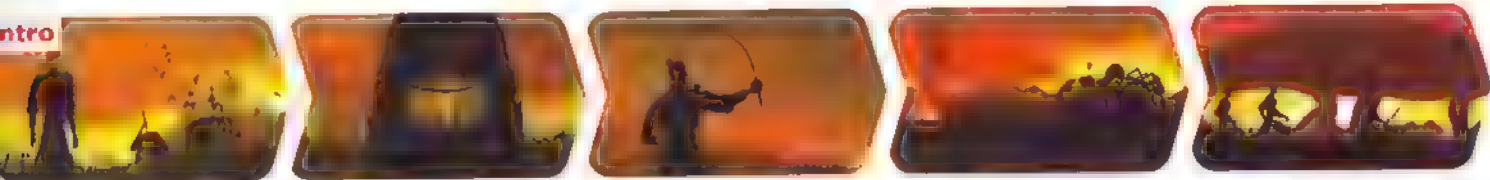
Tomb Raider itself and the way you control the character is innovative, intelligent and modern, but the character you control is a '70s throwback from the days when pouting lovelies were always to be found propped up against any consumer icon advertised for men.' Violet Berlin explains why she prefers manga babes on Radio 5's *The Big Byte*.



[1] Some of the scenery's quite stunning, just like the original. [2] She could stay there all day if she liked, you know. [3] A couple of scary Tibetan monk types gang up on Lara. But she won't stand for it. [4] Yikes! An eagle. With the new outdoor areas, the flying monsters have really come into their own. [5] The urban elements of the game add a whole new feel. In fact, if you just take a look at the screenshots on this page, you can see how *Tomb Raider* has much more variety in its environments. [6] Shoot through the window, but don't dive in. [7] Look at the way she carries that M16 rifle - what a girl! [8] The new lighting's a distinct improvement, too. [9] Lara loves life on the edge. Aha ha ha. Sorry. [10] These big blokes are best avoided, especially as you haven't got any weapons at this stage of the game. [11] As well as looking very pretty, and really brightening things up, the flares are very useful.

Tomb Raider 2

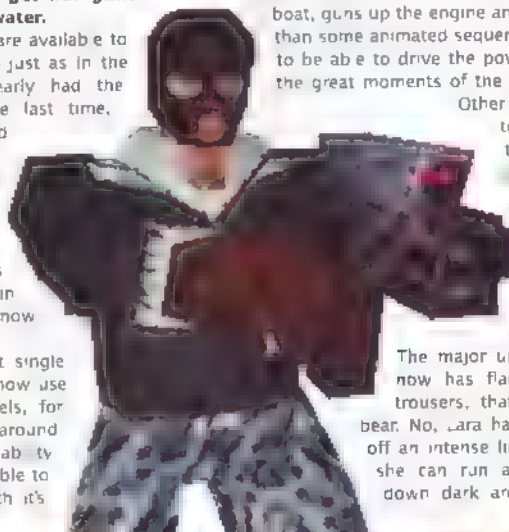
Intro



► previously inaccessible have opened up to her. If the level designers were artists, it would be like they'd discovered a whole new colour to paint with. And as we know, the lads at Core were the Michelangelos of level design before. Now the levels are bigger, more complex and more fun. **There are other small improvements to her movement as well. Lara can also wade through shallow water now, meaning that she can get her guns out while still in the water.**

All of these new moves are available to practise in Lara's mansion – just as in the predecessor. But Lara's clearly had the interior decorators in since last time, who've very sensibly managed to convince her to move her gym out of the ballroom and into the open air, where it now resembles one of those assault courses beloved of *The Krypton Factor*. And that's also a significant new factor in *TR2* – a lot of the levels are now out in the open air.

But perhaps the biggest single new thing is that Lara can now use vehicles. In the Venice levels, for example, she gets to ride around in a powerboat. Indeed, her ability to do this is vital to being able to complete the level on which it's



Yes, it's essentially the same game as!

It's got so much more!

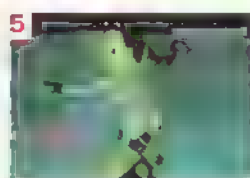
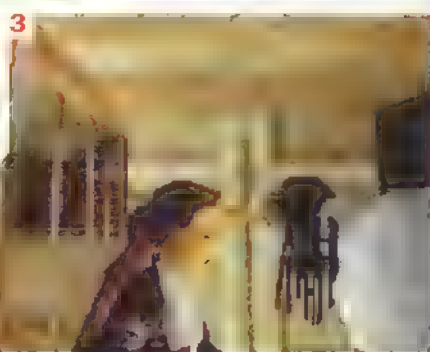
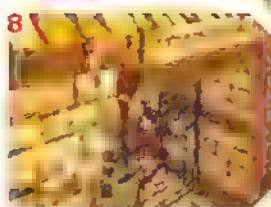
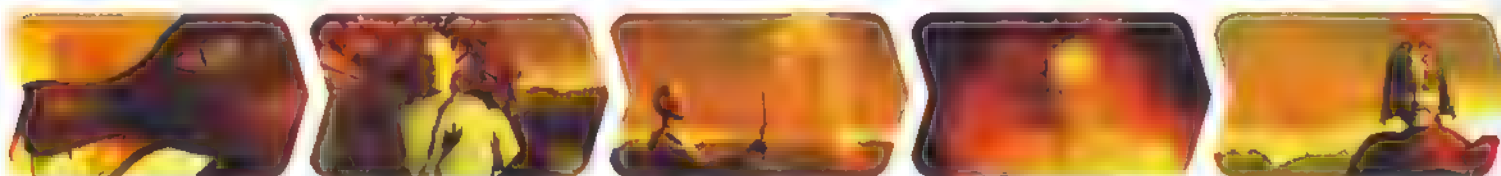
introduced. The first time Lara climbs into a power boat, guns up the engine and you realise that – rather than some animated sequence – you're actually going to be able to drive the powerboat around, is one of the great moments of the new game.

Other significant improvements to the first game include the addition of 'dynamic lighting'. Now that might sound pretty dull, but what it means is that in *Tomb Raider 2*, sources of light can move around, whereas in *Tomb Raider* they were just stuck in one position.

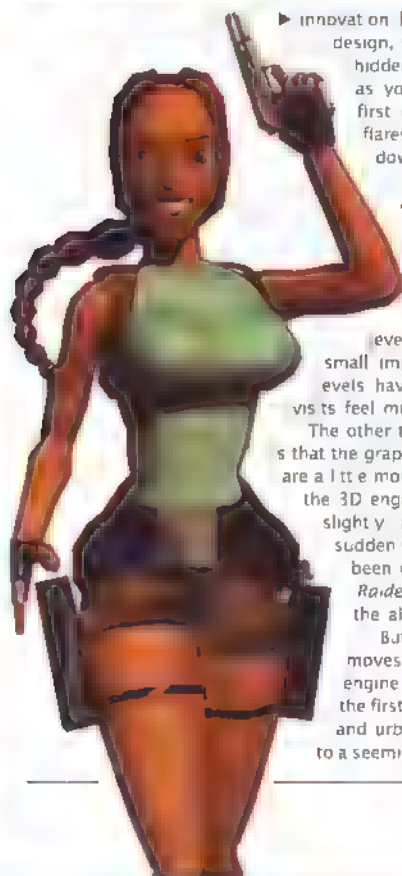
The major upshot of this is that Lara now has flares. Not the dodgy '70s trousers, that would be too much to bear. No, Lara has distress flares that give off an intense light for a short while that she can run around holding, or throw down dark areas. Again this simple ►



On the later Tibetan levels in the snow there are lots of traps that need good timing to avoid. This sequence demonstrates what happens when you have to jump over the rolling snowballs that are released as soon as you step down into the valley at the beginning of this particular level. Or at least it would, if it was possible to both operate Lara and take screen grabs at the same time. Doh. Still, you probably get the idea. Well, we hope so.



[1] She's still the finest shimmer in the world. [2] Clug, plug. [3] Have you ever been face-to-face with a yeti? [4] Go on Lara, get in the speedboat. [5] Those eyebrows are incredible. And look at her ponytail float. [6] One of Lara's more fetching outfits - her mountaineering gear. [7] Floating around in a seaplane hanger. [8] Hmm, can she get down there, or not? I wonder...



► innovation has led to much more intriguing level design, with certain areas of some levels being hidden in pitch black. In much the same way as you had to hunt for ammunition in the first game, you'll find yourself hunting for flares so that you can find out what's hidden down that long, dark tunnel.

The other new element that radically alters the shape of the levels is that there are now glass windows dotted around. Glass windows that you can satisfyingly shatter simply by firing your pistol at them. All of these new elements combine to make the new levels feel much more like real places. These small improvements to the interactivity of the levels have made many of the places that Lara visits feel much more realistic.

The other thing you'll notice about *Tomb Raider 2* is that the graphics are a little bit sharper. The textures are a little more complicated, Lara is a little smoother, the 3D engine is a bit quicker, and some of those slightly annoying glitches, like when you'd suddenly be able to see between walls, have been eliminated. This all helps to give *Tomb Raider 2* a richer, lusher feel, and adds to the all-important feeling of 'being there'.

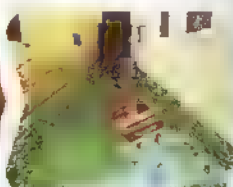
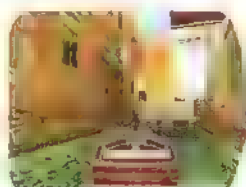
But it's not just the new ways that Lara moves, or the technical advances in the game engine that make *Tomb Raider 2* different to the first game. *TR2* has a different, more modern and urban feel to it. The plot doesn't take you to a seemingly endless list of fanciful archeological

sites - Lara is more Jane Bond in the sequel than Indiana Jones. There are levels set in modern day Venice, on platforms, in underwater shipwrecks and rather than the occasional tiger or mummy leaping out to scare the wits out of you, these levels are heavily populated by people. Admittedly, they're all still enemies, but whereas the first *Tomb Raider* had an almost ghostly, barren feeling to it, *TR2* seems at times almost indecently crowded. There are thugs with iron bars trying to bash your head in, there are mafioso with automatic weaponry trying to gun you down and - most sinisterly of all, the first time you encounter them - there are frogmen lurking in the water armed with harpoon guns.

To help her cope with this new array of enemies, Lara has had her weaponry upgraded. In addition to the familiar pistols, automatics and uzis of the original, *TR2* lets you get your hands on some pretty serious



The name's Bond, Jane Bond



Look! It's Lara driving around in a dinky little speedboat. You can steer it, put it in reverse, and bash it into walls (although that can hurt Lara).

Tomb Raider 2



firepower, including an M16 combat rifle, a harpoon gun of your own to use underwater and the ultimate in carnage-wreakers – a grenade launcher.

This modern feel has also got to the background environment, too. There are now huge air-conditioning fans to avoid and giant swinging hooks to watch out for. Instead of the quiet ambience of long-deserted tombs, Lara now spends most of the game listening to the background hum of electrical generators, the throbbing of powerful engines and the piercing shriek of intruder alarms. That's not to say that *TR2* is lacking in atmospheric ruins to explore; there are plenty. But at least half the levels are set firmly in the modern world, making for a whole new kind of excitement and adventure.

Tomb Raider 2 is also quite a bit harder than the first game. Which is no bad thing for all us battle-scarred veterans. The first level introduces you to a mind-boggling sequence of trap-doors and crushing rooms that will take all your wits and speed of react on

to overcome. There's a series of rooms that require you to keep moving – and always in the right direction – to avoid certain death. And this is where our only criticism of *TR2* comes in.

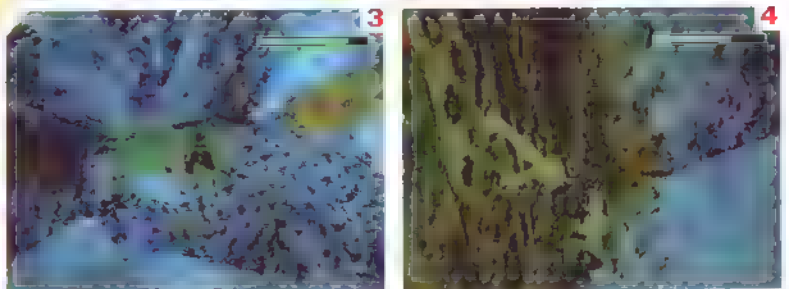
The first game was, as you will no doubt be aware, a huge success on the PC as well as on the PlayStation. The only significant difference between the two was that while the PlayStation game had a series of save points dotted throughout each level, the PC

version allowed you to save the game at any point. Unfortunately, this made the PC version much easier to complete than the PlayStation original, and also removed quite a bit of the edge from the gameplay. This was because the PlayStation save points were an integral part of the level design. They were frustratingly well-placed, often stretching your gaming abilities to the absolute limit. They were also the source of a good deal of the game's excitement, as you wondered whether you could nurse a severely injured Lara through enough of the level to find the ▶



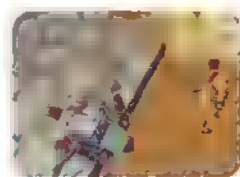
(1) It's the beautiful new details that really make this game. This is a painted-on decal on the side of a seaplane. (2) And this is a poster for some geezer called Bartoll on a Venetian wall. (3-4) There are much lengthier underwater levels in *Tomb Raider 2*, including this old wreck that you get to explore.

[pistols, automatics and Uzis of the original,]
[pretty serious weaponry]



Once you get the hang of controlling the speedboat, it's time to start pulling stunts. So what about this one? Just drive around and get up some speed, head for the long ramp and then... up, up and away as you go screaming up it and fly through the bridge, breaking the windows in the process. Cool.

Eat my lead



TR2 has a much wider variety of baddies than the original. Now there are flying creatures like the eagle on the left, baddies with iron bars like the second guy along, Tibetan baddies with guns like the guy in snow camouflage, Yetis like this one that's been impaled by iron bars (I never touched him, Your Honour), nasty geezers with automatic pistols and, erm, thugs with clubs. But, as you can see, nobody's going to give lovely Lara any real problems...



(1) That's the harpoon gun. And Lara's in her wetsuit. (2) This rusty old hulk is packed with nasty men with guns. So be on your guard.



► next save point. On the PC there was none of that excitement. If you wanted to save the game, you just went ahead and did it. Of course, at the same time the PlayStation save points were an artificial element of a game that was so realistic in many other ways; you're not often looking out for a transparent blue diamond in real life. And they were quite possibly viewed by the designers as a necessary evil, given the limited RAM available in the PlayStation's memory and on memory cards.

In TR2, though, you can save the game at any point. And—as we've pointed out above—the game is also quite a deal more difficult. While in the first game you often had plenty of time to prepare yourself to make a jump, the second game has many more instances where you're required to act instantly—either because of a moving obstacle that must be avoided, because you've had your weapons confiscated and you're being chased by armed baddies, or because of switches that only open doors for a limited amount of time. So what you do now, of course,

is to save the game every time you're in a dangerous position. And if you fail your task, you just reload and try again. And again. And again. Until you succeed.

The unfortunate consequence of this is that, rather than making the game feel more realistic by taking out the blue oozes, TR2 actually uses some of its flow to the continual ghastly interruptions of the loading screen. Luckily this flaw is restricted to only a couple of occasions on each level, so you won't get really frustrated about it. But it's not as good as it used to be. And that's a shame. Of course, for PC players this won't be such an annoying problem, largely because it should take quite a lot less time to load a level from hard-drive than it does from the CD.

The rest of TR2 is so good and in so many places such a significant improvement on the original, though, that we shouldn't be letting this one error of judgement affect our scoring of the game. Just don't write in and say that we didn't warn you.

Tomb Raider 2, then, is an even more fantastic game than its predecessor. Which given the fairly short amount of time that they had, is a testament to the growing confidence and expertise of the great team at Core Design. It's guaranteed to sell extraordinarily well and, unlike most sequels, will deserve to do so on its own merits, rather than by trading on its name. Like the first game, TR2 offers you 16 superb levels of gripping gameplay that will amuse, bemuse, scare and exhilarate you in a way that previous few other games do. We have seen the future, and the future belongs to Lara.



(1) See that explosion? That's the grenade launcher firing, that is. (2) Down, down. Deeper and down.

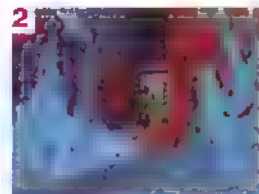
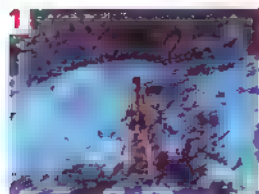
Alternatively...

Tomb Raider 2	10/10	PSM
Tomb Raider	10/10	PSM
Fade To Black	9/10	PS
Excalibur 2555AD	7/10	PSM

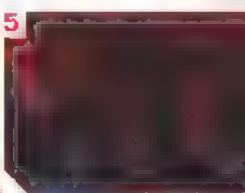
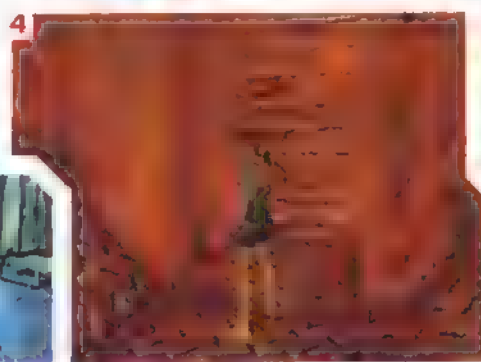


firmly in the modern world, making

excitement and adventure.



(1) Some of the levels are almost nightmarish, with the rusty ochre of long-submerged metal clashing horribly with the cool blue of the seaside. (2) There's a way up just around this corner. There has to be. (3) Lara can fit an awful lot in that tiny little back pack of hers. At the moment it's got five guns, some flares and a couple of artefacts in it. (4, 5) Doesn't that look just like iron?



Tomb Raider 2

Meet the gang

This is where *TR2* was born. (2) The team were particularly happy with the animation of Lara's ponytail. The *Tomb Raider 2* team - Heather Gibson, Neal Boyd, Andrew Howe, Jess Charmet, Jason Gosling, Gavin Rumery, and Stuart Atkinson - pose with their creation.



vehicles and so on) which are you most proud of?

Lara's ponytail, which now behaves realistically. If she tilts her head forward it falls over her neck and hangs down in front of her. If she's swimming it flows out behind her. It even blows about in the wind.

Were you surprised at the success of *Tomb Raider*? Particularly the press reaction?

Some of the team were. In fact we were all a bit surprised about the amount of focus on Lara. But we knew it was going to be big. It was something that people had been trying to do for a long time.

Do you think *TR2* is harder than the first one? If so, is that deliberate?

It's more challenging, yes. But the training level has been improved too. *Tomb Raider 2* is a lot bigger than the first game. Fortunately we now allow PlayStation owners to save at any point.

And finally, will there be a *Tomb Raider 3*? And what will be new about that?

Well, we will just have to see how we feel after our extended holidays.



Making a game like *Tomb Raider 2* is not a solo effort; there's a big team of people involved in the project. We asked them who were, what they did and how they felt about new game now that it's finally completed they can take a well-earned break.

Many of you are there on the team? What do all do?

In particular order (well actually, clockwise around the room...):

Stuart Atkinson has replaced Toby Card as Lara's animator. He's also animated the cut scenes for the

Heather Gibson created many of the *TR2* levels, using both the 3D architecture and the textures. Andrew Howe did most of the conversion to Windows 95 and DirectX, and system programming on the PlayStation version.

Jason Gosling worked on the programming side of many new moves, and on various front-end and animation improvements.

Gavin Rumery started the Windows 95 version, added the dynamic lighting and various tweaks, implemented all of the new baddies, traps, and generally sorted out the game. Neal Boyd is the other main map and texture artist.

Jess Charmet created all of the new baddies and what can be found in the game.

Andy Arnold wrote the script.

Peter Barnard led the FMV team, and was helped by Dave Reading, Lee Platen and Andy Sandham.

Nathan McCree wrote and produced all of the music, sound effects and FMV/cut scene tracks.

Peter Duncan and Richard Morton worked on extra levels and areas.

And who did most of the work, then?

We all came up with ideas. Gavin seems to be in charge of keeping the ideas within technical limitations, and Vicky has written another great script.

Of all the new technical bits (active lighting,



They may look complicated, but the *Tomb Raider 2* design tools allowed the team to create some of the largest, most convoluted 3D environments on the PlayStation with a minimum of fuss and bother.

VERDICT

■ GRAPHICS:

Still crazily good 10

■ GAMEPLAY:

Slightly marred 9

■ SOUND

An improvement 10

■ PRESENTATION

Top-notch 9

■ LIFESPAN

Just as big 10

■ ORIGINALITY

Vehicles too 9

A year on and *Tomb Raider 2* takes the original and shakes it by the scruff of the neck. Who'd have thought it could get better?

10

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DEC

The world's FIRST EVER review of *Colony Wars*! Street Fighter EX Plus Alpha – the FIRST verdict! FIRST EVER hands-on, extended-play preview of *Tomb Raider 2*! FIRST look at FIFA '98! Are you sensing a pattern here?



Tomb Raider II
Hands-On Preview!

PlayStation

POWER

Colony Wars

Epic space-blasters from the makers of Wipeout!
World Exclusive Review!

WIN!
The Top 10
PlayStation
Games!

Plus!

Street Fighter EX
Gran Turismo
Rapid Racer
Castlevania X
Jersey Devil
Overboard
Ninth

Free!
68-Page Tips Bible!

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Every month *PlayStation Power* proudly boasts a FREE 68-page full-colour tips bible containing as many tips, cheats and guides as the so-called tips mags!



OWN CALIF. NOW!

PlayTest

As far as visual appeal is concerned, *Colony Wars* is going to be very hard to beat. The combination of high resolution, cool ship designs and amazing effects makes it one of the most cinematic gaming experiences on the PlayStation.



Colony Wars

Ever watched *Star Wars* and wished you were flying a starfighter in a desperate mission against an evil foe? Psygnosis may have just what you're looking for...



For a dedicated gamer, there are few things as frustrating as a game that's so very nearly great, but doesn't quite manage to achieve its potential. It's even more upsetting when it's a game that you really want to like and the things that let it down are all fairly small and simple—the kind of stuff that would be so easy to fix. It's not a problem you associate with Psygnosis, either. Over the past two years the company has become one of the premier UK PlayStation houses, and has developed some of the greatest games available, including such classics as *Wipeout 2047* and last month's superb *G.Police*. We've all come to expect great things from any new Psygnosis title, which only goes to make *Colony Wars* even more disappointing.

It's not that it's a bad game, far from it, in many ways *Colony Wars* is excellent. It's just that the whole doesn't deliver on the promise of the individual parts. There's so much that's great about the title, but the end result is let down by just a few critical weaknesses.



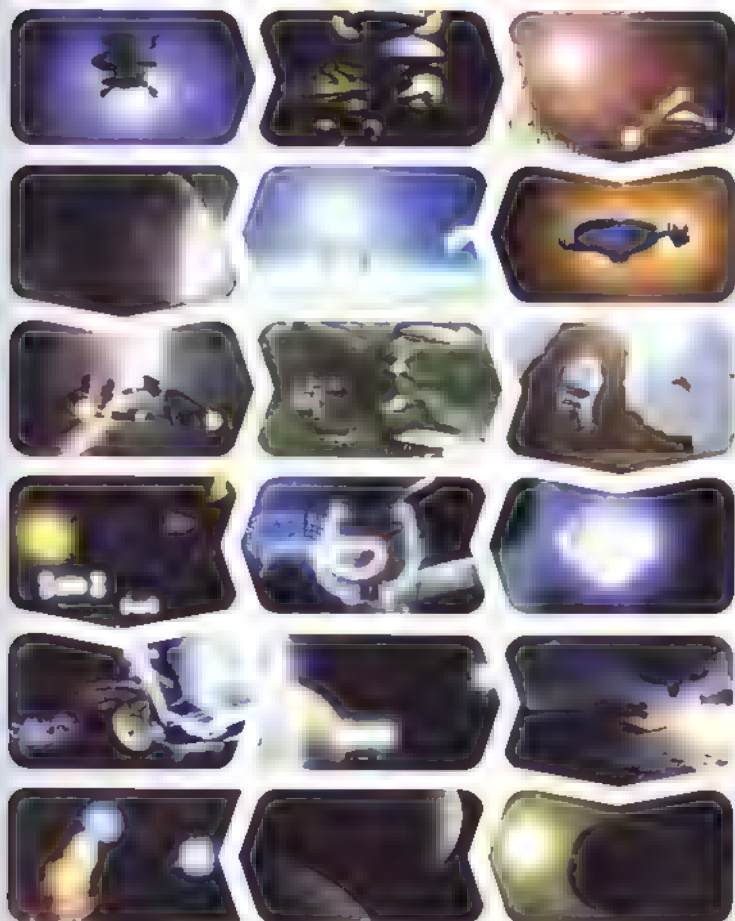
The scale of some of the capital ships is staggering, as are the incredible explosion sequences when they blow up...



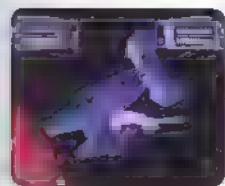


PUBLISHER:	Psygnosis	DEVELOPER:	In-house
RELEASE DATE:	November	ORIGIN:	UK
PRICE:	£44.99	STYLE:	3D space combat

Rendered speechless



Over the past couple of years, Psygnosis have refined the pre-rendered intro and cut scene to a high art, filling its games with some of the most stunning sequences ever to grace the PlayStation. *Colony Wars* is no exception, and is packed with animations that'll leave you drooling.



Colony Wars is a space combat game set in the far future. Humanity has expanded into space, and now controls an Empire spreading across 40 worlds and five star systems. Unfortunately, though, as the Empire has spread, it's become increasingly rigid and dictatorial. Eventually a small group of colonies, the League of Free Worlds, has risen up in an attempt to gain their independence from the empire as a whole. And this is where you come in. As a newly trained League pilot, you must take part in the battle against the Empire, flying a variety of starfighters on a series of missions.

The most immediate thing to strike you about *Colony Wars* is its appearance. Ever since *Wipeout*, the presentation of Psygnosis games has become one of the standards against which other PlayStation games are judged, and *Colony Wars* raises the bar another couple of notches – it's one of the best presented PlayStation games yet. It doesn't just look and sound lovely, but it's well designed and very atmospheric as well, setting the stage for the game proper.

It's only once you're into a mission, though, that you realise that the presentation was just an appetiser. The actual missions are all in 512x240 high resolution, running at a constant, seemingly unflappable 30 frames per second. It can take a little while to get used to, but once you do you can pull off some very cool moves



(1) An Empire supply ship bites the dust. **(2)** This Destroyer is tough to kill. **(3)** The Death Star? **(4)** Use the right weapon for the job at hand...

Colony Wars doesn't just look

and sound lovely, but it's well designed

and very atmospheric as well

Indeed. Likewise, the combat itself is well balanced and finely tuned. The enemy fighters are skillful without being ridiculously hard to defeat, and the result is something that sits halfway between a straight 3D blaster and an 'simulation' like the *X-Wing* and *TIE Fighter* games for the PC.

Finally, all of this is backed up by a very clever campaign system and some excellent mission designs. Instead of simply having to repeat a mission until you complete it, as is the case with most mission-based

Screen tests



External

By far the prettiest view, but sadly also the hardest to actually play the game in



Full Screen

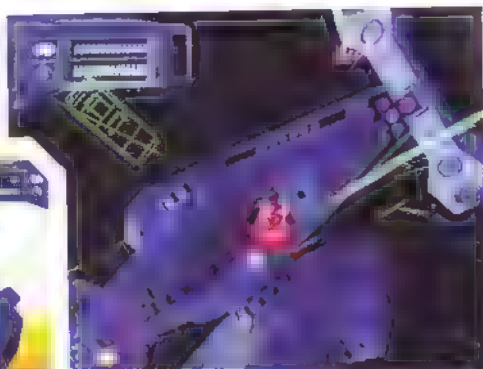
The best view for dogfighting, giving you the widest possible view on the action.



Cockpit

The most atmospheric, giving a greater sense of actually flying a starfighter in combat.

Attacking the larger Empire vessels is tough and dangerous, but there's a real sense of satisfaction when they finally blow up.



► games, *Colony Wars* has a dynamic campaign system in which your success or failure in each mission affects the course of the League's battle with the Empire. Do well, and the League will start to win. Do badly and things will start to go down hill.

Add all this up, and by all rights you should have in your hands the best space combat game ever – one that laughs in the somewhat pitiful face of efforts like *Wing Commander IV*. And to a certain extent, you do – but not nearly as much as you should have. *Colony Wars* is cruelly let down by some seemingly minor points that manage to combine in a way that doesn't actually ruin the game, but makes it much harder to appreciate and enjoy than it should be.

Perhaps the worst of these flaws is that, while the game has this very clever dynamic campaign structure, it doesn't actually tell you what's going on. Very rarely does the game make it very clear whether you've failed or succeeded in a mission. What's more, even if you have failed, it doesn't specify why. Worst of all, although your performance affects the course of the campaign, this isn't really made very clear to you. By failing to emphasise some of its strongest features, *Colony Wars* fails to involve the player. It's very hard to get caught up in the game, as what's going on seems to be unrelated to your play.

This also results in the missions seeming very 'samey'. Without knowing why you failed, and sometimes not even being very clear one what you had to do in the first place, they can quickly seem to become a rather dull series of basting. Likewise, the game actually includes a huge amount of background data on the star

Weapon POWER!



Death and Destruction!
Colony Wars features a range of weaponry. Here are just three of those on offer...



Anti-Shield Lasers
You'd never guess, but these are used to knock down defensive shields.



Lasers
Your basic, 'general-purpose' weapon, okay against shields, great against armour.



Plasma Cannon
A powerful, multi-purpose weapon, but the slow bolts make it hard to aim.

systems and craft involved, much of which helps to develop the game world and atmosphere. Unfortunately it's hidden away, so that unless you go looking for it you'll never even know it's there.

And this is the key problem with *Colony Wars*. Behind all the glitz and gam, there's a very good space combat game. However, to get anything like the best out of it, you have to put in a lot of effort. Until you realise what's actually going on, it's all too easy to quickly dismiss the game as a good-looking but dull baster. With a few simple changes, the game could have pulled you into the action. As it is, though, it's a real effort.

Ultimately, then, it's hard to recommend *Colony Wars* as highly as it should deserve. If you're into space combat games and are willing to put in the work to really get to grips with the game, this has a great deal to offer. Unless you have the dedication required, though, you'll probably find it a fairly dull and repetitive game. It isn't, but that's certainly the way it's going to come across to most PlayStation gamers, which is a terrible shame – especially as, in several ways, it's superior to *C-Police*.

Alternatively...

<i>C-Police</i>	8/10	PS1
<i>Wing Commander IV</i>	8/10	PS1
<i>Colony Wars</i>	7/10	PS1

A multitude of ships

There are over 50 different types of ship in *Colony Wars*, ranging from small, high-speed scouts to vast battleships and dreadnoughts. Throughout the course of the game you fight with and against all of them, and get the chance to fly six different fighters, each with its own strengths and weaknesses...



VERDICT

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GRAPHICS

Utterly gorgeous 9

GAMEPLAY

Challenging 7

SOUND

Atmospheric and involving 9

PRESENTATION

All but perfect 10

LIFESPAN

Healthier than it appears 8

ORIGINALITY

Some neat twists 7

Colony Wars is a stunning and well-designed 3D space combat game with a great deal to offer if you're willing to make the effort to find it.

7 out of 10

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1 Ooh, it's a shop, just like you get in proper RPGs. **2** *Castlevania*'s high-speed elevator. Go down: haberdashery, lingerie, garden furniture, the living dead... **3** Now, that's GOT to hurt. **4** These nasty marine critters jump up out of the water and play havoc with your hair-do.

Castlevania: Symphony Of The Night

Is it a platform game? Is it an RPG? Is it a dreadful throwback to the games we used to play on the Mega Drive and SNES and thought were long gone and good riddance?

The mass exodus of games crossing the border from the oppressive dictatorship of Nintendo to the free republic of PlayStation continues apace. The latest title ready to hand over its papers and join the land of the free is *Castlevania: Symphony Of The Night* – or *Castlevania IV*, had it chosen to stay in its home and

The legend of *Castlevania* began on the 8 bit NES back in the '80s, where the whip-wielding heir of the Belmont family sought to take a stake in the Dracula estate. The action platformer was twice sequenced on the NES, followed by a tidy version on the Game Boy and a sumptuous reincarnation on the Super NES. And there may be another sequel on the Game Boy... we forget.

Anyway what should have been a climactic culmination of events on the N64 has instead taken root on the PlayStation, due in part to the cavernous CD storage; due, no doubt, to lacklustre sales of

Deep in the bowels of the castle, you meet the hooded ferryman who'll escort you to an important relic. But, as Chris de Burgh warned, for God's sake don't pay him (he'll only want a tip).

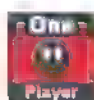


Nintendo's machine in Japan.

So, good news for PlayStation owners... or is it? For while this is indeed *Castlevania*, with its vampire-hunting shenanigans intact, any thoughts of a splendid 3D romp through spooky caverns – *Tomb Raider* with whips and gars, we postulated – have vanished. In fact *Castlevania: Symphony Of The Night* is merely a 2D platformer with RPG overtones.

The game carries on from the end of the SNES game – quite literally in fact. You're dropped straight into the climactic confrontation between Richter Belmont and Dracula in a pixel-perfect replica of *Castlevania IV*'s finale. Naturally the odds are in your favour and the old Count is banished to wherever the undead go when

The gameplay marks a change from the current crop of no-brainers, with a mix of mystery and a captivating sense of progress.



■ PUBLISHER:	Konami	■ DEVELOPER:	In-house
■ RELEASE DATE:	Out now	■ ORIGIN:	Japan
■ PRICE:	£44.99	■ STYLE:	Platform adventure

they've stopped being undead and are just plain dead.

There's a slightly convoluted plot sequence involving some bint called Maria Renard, that Richter bloke, the castle itself and Alucard, the son of Dracula (real name: Dracula Vlad Tepes). To cut a tedious tale short, you're playing Alucard (real name: Adrian Farenheights Tepes) on a quest to find... someone. Possibly Maria, possibly Belmont, possibly Dracula again. It's not overly clear at this juncture.

So off you trot, tooed up with a variety of weaponage, when **who do you bump into but Death, Drac's old ally, who nicks all your stuff. De-tooled and suitably vulnerable, the game proper begins...**

From here it's a question of exploration, picking up weapons, puzzle-solving, gaining experience points, discovering items, collecting spells, and, of course, kicking the crap out of a variety of demons, skeletons, monsters, ogres, vampires, ghosts, ghouls and the occasional occasional table (no, really). Then, later on, Alucard (have you worked it out yet?) can pick up 'relics' that enable him to shapeshift into a bat, a wolf, or mist in order to best the castle's more evil occupants.

The game sprawls around the confines of Castlevania, with dozens of rooms, all inhabited by the aforementioned minions of the Count and, naturally, constructed from platforms positioned at just-leapable distances from one another. Save points (oh, yes, you absolutely definitely need a memory card) exist as separate rooms featuring ornate, pulsing, glowing dodecahedrons (we think). You can't miss them – and you'd better not, either.

The first thing you notice about *Castlevania: SOTN* is its graphics: the SNES version (possibly viewed through rose-tinted glasses) boasted spectacular levels with loads of parallax, subtle lighting and lots of pseudo-



(1) If nothing else, Dracula has terrific taste in art. **(2)** Who the hell chooses to keep dogs of this size in their home? They'll knacker up the furniture, you know.



3D and over-the-top graphical effects. This version as far as we played at an age – was a bit 2D, probably because of the increased size of the game. However, it certainly doesn't look particularly 32 bit, especially the wooden animated baddies and decidedly low-rent death-throe explosions.

Secondly, the music isn't really a patch on the SNES title, which boasted some of the coolest tunes to come from the 8-bit N64 beige box. There are some sweeping, melodramatic passages in this latest game, but the music sounds like much more of an afterthought than previously. Still, at least we get lost of speech, even if it is clichéd and a bit naff.

However, it's not a bad news. The gameplay, though not quite as expected, marks a change from the current crop of no-brainers, with an air of mystery and a captivating sense of progress. As you gain experience and collect stronger weapons and better armour, you do get a strong feeling of achievement, of making ground (though this is naturally countered by the game simply getting harder).

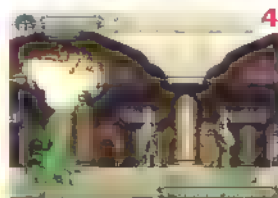
Save points are slightly undergenerous, given the size of the task, and the continual replaying of levels until you find the key/kill the boss/solve the puzzle will probably be its major lifespan shortener. That and the overall sameness of the levels.

Ultimately, it would have been nice if the game wasn't so... old-fashioned. There's little here that couldn't have been done on the 16-biters, save size and sound hell, the scrolling flick screen system even harks back to the old 8-bit machines.

Fans of the *Castlevania* of old will probably feel a little short-changed by this outing, it's a good platform romp and a fine game in itself, but just think what it would have been like in 3D.



It would have been nice if the game wasn't so... old-fashioned. There's little here that couldn't have been done on the 16-biters.



(1) Must... resist... temptation... to make... 'bott... end...' gag. **(2)** The map. Pale blue shows where you've been, dark blue where you ain't. **(3)** Yipe! Attack of the pulsing plasma blob. **(4)** Wow! Check out the 16-bit explosion on this badly animated plant-thing.

Alternatively...

<i>Castlevania</i>	7/10	PSN6
<i>Bayman</i>	7/10	PSN1
<i>Mickey's Wild Adventure</i>	7/10	PSN3
<i>Johnny Bazzooka</i>	6/10	PSN4
<i>The Adventures Of Lomax</i>	6/10	PSN3

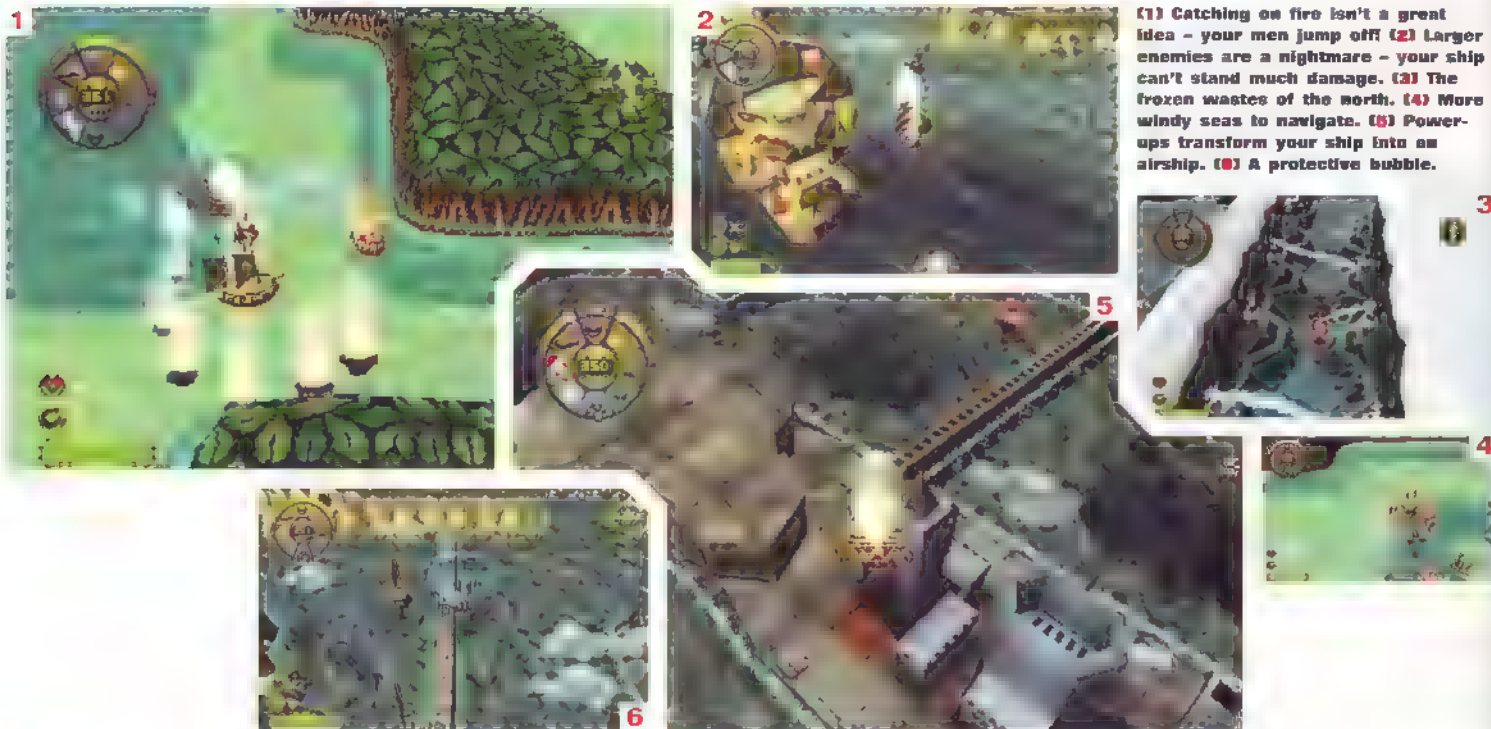
VERDICT

■ GRAPHICS:	Pretty, but unimpressive 5	■ GAMEPLAY:	Compelling action 8
■ SOUND:	More MC Hammer... 6	■ PRESENTATION:	Drab option screens 6
■ LIFESPAN:	Huge – if you can be arsed 7	■ ORIGINALITY:	Too old-fashioned 3

Playable and vast, but lacking the sparkle of Konami's previous offerings, and it's all a bit 2D. A thinking man's platformer: action addicts need not apply.

7

out of 10



(1) Catching on fire isn't a great idea - your men jump off! (2) Larger enemies are a nightmare - your ship can't stand much damage. (3) The frozen wastes of the north. (4) More windy seas to navigate. (5) Power-ups transform your ship into an airship. (6) A protective bubble.

Overboard!

We will fight them on the beaches!

Well, perhaps we'll just stick to the sea...

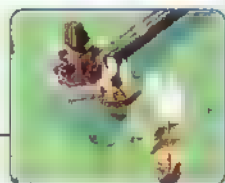


Thankfully nautical jokes are not the forte of this particular reviewer. If they were then this would be the ideal opportunity, for *Overboard!*'s nautical theme - right down to the Captain Pugwash-style music - is more than forcefully rammed down your throat. But then that's not entirely surprising. With its cartoony cut scenes and its polished, watery graphics positively stinking of fresh fish and salty air, you get the distinct impression that the programmers have really made an effort to

make you realise (as if it weren't obvious enough already) that this is a game about the sea. Or more specifically about boats, and one boat in particular - **the pirate galleon that you merrily sail about the myriad oceans of the colourful land, sinking any other boat that you come across** and grabbing decent foks' treasure. As is what's expected of you, you being a pirate.

If you really had to categorise *Overboard!*, somewhat surprisingly when first looking at the thing, you'd class it with the shoot 'em up genre, as most of your time is spent dodging lethal obstacles and killing off sea-bound enemies such as rival galleons, killer fish and a collection of other oddball nautical wayfarers. Of course you need something to kill 'em with, and *Overboard!* most certainly isn't short of some nasty means of doing just that.

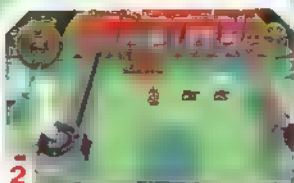
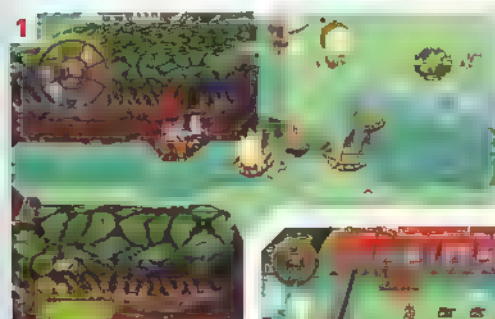
You start off with your cannons - either a single cannon at the front of your craft, or five-way ultra-deadly ones which fire from port and starboard (using a button on the joystick for each) - then as you progress you can amass an armoury of other weapons, such as rockets for taking out airborne targets, mines to leave in your wake, and missile-type things which are slow but which sink just about anything.



(1) That central area is gushing out flame. (2) Check out the excellent water effects. The waves lap at the cliffs.



PUBLISHER: **Psygnosis** DEVELOPER: **Psygnosis**
 RELEASE DATE: **Out now** ORIGIN: **UK**
 PRICE: **£44.99** STYLE: **Shoot 'em up/puzzler**



(1) The sailors who've jumped overboard must be saved. (2) Sail into a port to claim it. (3) The huge fireball isn't good news. (4) Use missiles to take out the balloon. (5) Killer parrots are one form of fauna you could well do without.



The oceans you navigate are far from wide, open spaces, they're more like intricate tributaries which weave their way through land masses, giving you plenty of opportunity to practise your ability to turn tight corners in something with a huge turning circle and no reverse 'gear'. Towns and villages line the beaches, together with occasional jetties which, when touched with your boat, start flying the pirate flag, marking your newly conquered territory and acting as a Save point in the level.

Overboard! may borrow its gameplay from the '80s, but its gorgeous looks belie this fact. Though erring on the 'twee' side, the huge splashes of colour and excellent water effects give the game a serious lift. The graphics help to make it fun, and you forget that the game is really rather dated – a mere reworking of traditional themes and styles. Likewise the immensely jolly pirate ditties, which play along as you fight your ocean battles, push the game firmly into the 'enjoyment' territory as well as adding to the nautical atmosphere. The actual sound effects are pretty mediocre – there's nothing here to shock or surprise – but this is no criticism for they blend in with the gameplay quite seamlessly.

Where there is a problem, however, is with the difficulty level. Now, hard games are good. Really tricky levels are great. But the save system sucks. You can save to memory card (or jot down a password) at the end of each of the 20 levels, which is all well and good. But should you save and consequently lose the last of your three lives (which is pretty inevitable, it's that hard), you start from your saved position with the same number of lives as you had when you made the save.

Though erring on the twee side,

the huge splashes of colour and the

excellent water effects give

the game a serious lift!

And this does pose a problem, because it means that you go through the same level again and again, retracing your steps just to be able to carry over maximum lives at the end of the level. Had all of your lives been restored when you load from a save, this would have avoided needless repetition. Sure, you won't end up playing the game for as many hours through to completion, but you might end up abandoning it before that point out of sheer boredom. There is a two player mode, though, and this is great fun – the screen pans out to keep both players' boats on screen at all times, and blowing away your mates is a great way to spend your time, naturally. What's more, for added mayhem there's a five player Multi-Tap option, too.

Overboard! is a superb game, despite the fact that it's just a very clever, good-looking shoot 'em up. But the save system does let it down slightly, and its lower score reflects this. One would have thought that playtesting would have ironed out this bugbear, but obviously not. So as it stands *Overboard!* is a fine title, but one that could ultimately prove too frustrating to play through to the end. It'll do well, no doubt, and it's more than worth a look, but bear in mind that the instant gratification isn't a feeling that is perpetuated – this is a game you have to work at, and it may well prove too hard for some.



Alternatively...

Overboard! 11/10 PS2
Return Fire 7/10 PS2

VERDICT

GRAPHICS:

Lovely and watery 9

GAMEPLAY

Retrospective 8

SOUND:

Great ditties 8

PRESENTATION

Shiver me timbers 7

LIFESPAN:

It's VERY hard, so ages 8

ORIGINALITY:

In looks, not feel 6

Overboard! is very much a piece of prime monk fish rather than a tiny bit of tuna, though the save system does smell a bit off.

8

out of 10

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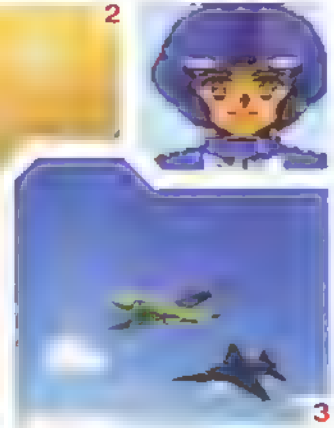
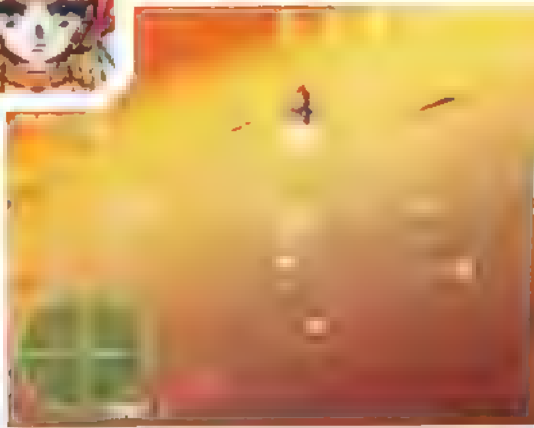
T3
TOMORROW'S TECHNOLOGY TODAY

PUBLISHER: JVC **DEVELOPER:** In-house
RELEASE DATE: Out now **ORIGIN:** Japan
PRICE: £39.99 **STYLE:** Arcade flight sim

PlayStation



- (1) Nice, but the graphics just don't compare to the best of today's games.
 (2) The simple HUD display makes the game fairly easy to get to grips with.
 (3) *Wing Over* offers the chance to fly a wide variety of planes.



Wing Over

Ever wanted to pit a Spitfire against an F-16? Now you can...
 ...sort of, in JVC's **Grand Prix-style air combat tournament**

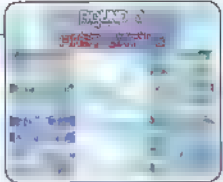
By the 21st century, the world will be enjoying a period of international peace. Realising, though, that humanity's basic aggression still needs an outlet, the governments of the world have come up with a new sport – an arena combat event which pits teams of pilots against each other in a Grand Prix style tournament for prize money and fame. As far as justifications for allowing 30 different aircraft from different time periods to be flown against each other this is pretty much as good as any other. And that's exactly what *Wing Over* lets you do.

You begin the game as part of a team of four pilots entering this futuristic sport for the first time. The tournament is played in eight rounds, each set in a

different country, and each taking the form of a **knock-out competition to decide the winner**. At the end of each round, points and cash prizes are awarded to the teams, depending on their position, and the individual pilots' kill tallies are recorded – much like the constructor and driver scheme used in modern Grand Prix racing. At the end of the last round, the winning team and pilot receive cash bonuses, then it's on to the next year's tournament. Although at the start of the game your team only has four aircraft available the money you win as you play can be used to buy new planes, upgrades, and even new pilots.

Wing Over is a sound idea, combining the tournament structure of a racing game with the management of your resources, and offering fairly non-stop dogfighting. And, to a certain extent, it's a fine game: the graphics are solid, the dogfights are fun, with a well-developed AI for the other planes, and the desire to buy bigger and better planes keeps you playing. Throw in a variety of other modes, including head-to-head via a link-up cable, and you have a proficient little air combat game.

Unfortunately, that's as good as it gets. The graphics aren't good enough to compete with the best PlayStation titles, the gameplay quickly becomes repetitive, and it takes a long time to save up for one of the really good planes, let alone four of 'em. In a 1, then, *Wing Over* will appeal to dogfighting enthusiasts, but it's far from being an instant classic.



All 30 planes that become available throughout the game are rated in several areas, and you can buy upgrades for all their important parts.

Alternatively...

E-Police	B/10	PSM75
Wing Over	B/10	PSM79
Air Combat	B/10	PSM

VERDICT

GRAPHICS:	Effective 7	GAMEPLAY:	Gets repetitive 6
SOUND:	Annoying engines 5	PRESENTATION:	Nothing special 5
LIFESPAN:	Lots and lots of planes 7	ORIGINALITY:	A couple of good ideas 7

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A nice idea let down by fairly average graphics and repetitive gameplay. If combat flight sims are your thing, though, you'll get a lot of fun out of *Wing Over*.

6
 out of 10

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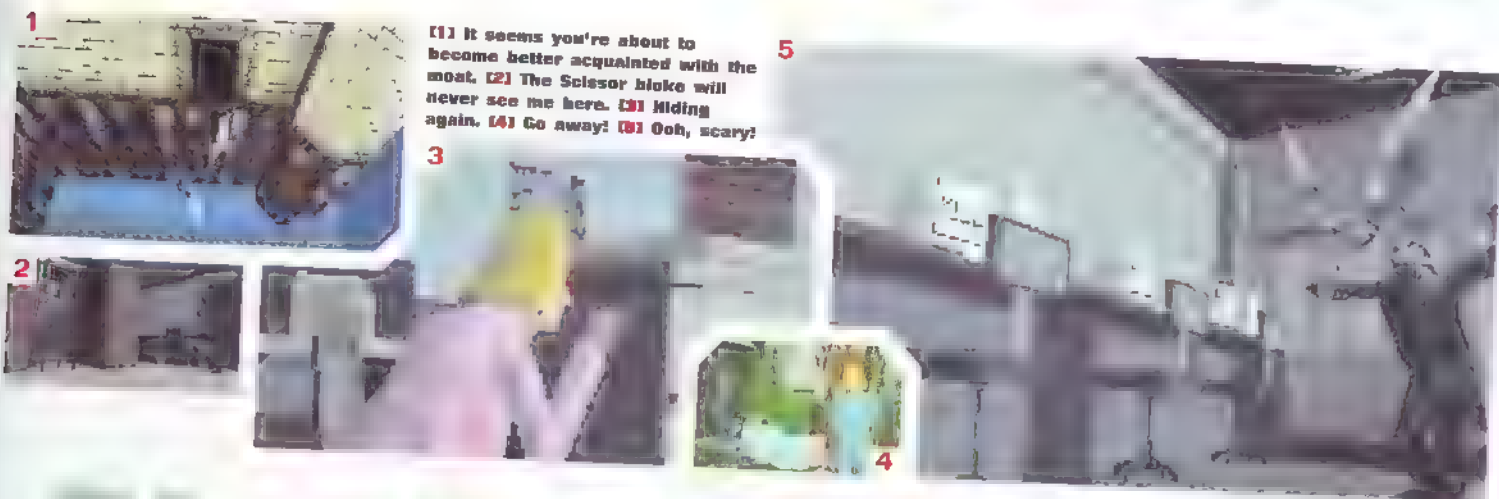
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PUBLISHER: ASCII Entertainment DEVELOPER: In-house
 RELEASE DATE: January '98 ORIGIN: Japan
 PRICE: £44.99 STYLE: 3D adventure



Clock Tower

Despite its bold claims to be a 'terrifying horror adventure' this tale of a scissoring serial killer is about as chilling as an episode of *Teletubbies*...

Reading the promotional bump that accompanies this game, you'd be forgiven for thinking that *Clock Tower* is the most terrifying experience since *The Exorcist* first outraged cinema goers. It's littered with phrases such as 'terrifying horror adventure', 'horrific graphics' and 'disturbing soundtrack'. Frankly, an episode of *Teletubbies* is a far more chilling experience.

The setting is Norway, and dead bodies are turning up all over the gaff. It seems that the victims have been hacked to death with a giant pair of scissors. This is especially disturbing because similar attacks occurred some years before, carried out by a killer who is now supposed to be dead. Gulp.

In order to uncover the truth about the return of the Scissorman, you get to control five of the story's characters. The game is strictly point and click - move the pointer over a 'hot' object and it will change shape to let you know that the object is worthy of investigation. You can also use the pointer to make the characters walk to a specific part of the room.

There are several problems with this particular adventure, though. First of all, it's not chilling at all. The game's plodding pace is so depressing you soon realise that you don't give a toss who the killer is, or who gets the snip next. Also, although it would like to convince you otherwise, *Clock Tower* is horribly linear. Enter a room, talk to someone, then try to exit it. The game tells you there's more to do in the room. Look at a cupboard, then... Not much of interest there, but still you're not allowed to leave. Look at a computer on the desk... Oh, now you can leave, but you still

haven't learned anything useful. So what was the point?

It's the same with the main map of the town. The game asks you where you'd like to go next. You choose the library and when you get there a friend says something along the lines of 'I didn't expect to see you today'. Hmm. A similar thing happens at the next location, and eventually the game gets bored of your incompetence, displaying some dialogue along the lines of 'Oh, I really should be getting over to the University soon'. Why didn't the game just say 'Go to the University' in the first place? There are sections in which you find and use objects and get to display some semblance of independent thought, but for the most part the game crudely pushes you through the ever-evolving plot without so much as a by-your-leave.

Stories about serial killers are guaranteed to give you goosebumps, but *Clock Tower* is so very dull and poorly executed, it completely wastes the huge potential of the subject.

Alternatively...

<i>Resident Evil</i>	8/10	PSM
<i>Alien in The Dark</i>	8/10	PSM
<i>Clock Tower</i>	4/10	PSM



(1) Calm down, mate. No need to lose your head. (2) It's pathetic really, all this hiding. All you have to do is make a stone with your fist and you win.

VERDICT

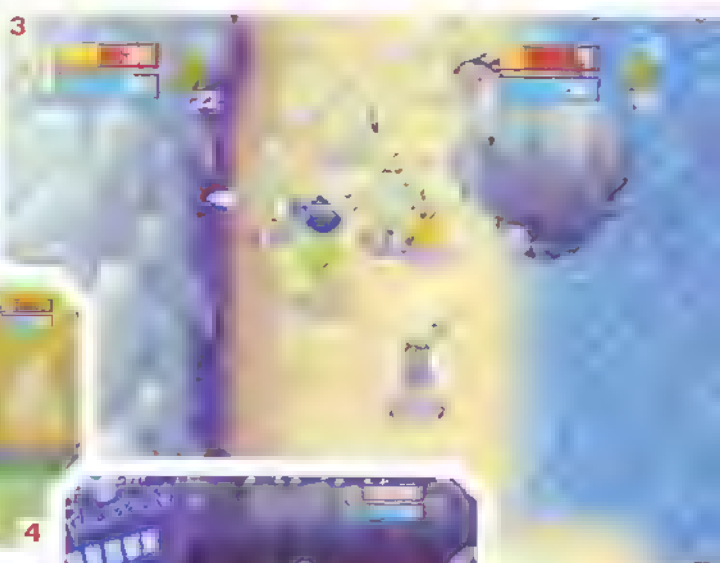
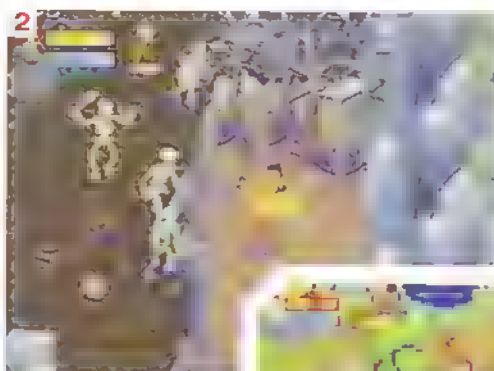
GRAPHICS: Not that terrifying 6 GAMEPLAY: Frighteningly uninvolved 4
 SOUND: Spooky in places 7 PRESENTATION: Pleasant enough 7
 LIFESPAN: Of average size 6 ORIGINALITY: Nothing new here 4

Spectacularly dull adventuring. The answers are forced upon you in such a way as to make you wonder why they bothered to involve the player at all.

4

out of 10

(1) The catapult; the first of many canny features. (2) This bit's a game of skittles, if you get it right. (3) Mods and rockers on Brighton beach circa 1988. (4) This is what happens when you touch the catapult. (5) Hercules found himself all alone in the forest just as it was starting to get dark... (6) For every one we knocked down, it seemed 10 came to replace him.



Herc's Adventures

What's a Greek urn? Apparently about as much gold as he can extort from you in return for the services and information that you'll need to save Persephone from Hades...

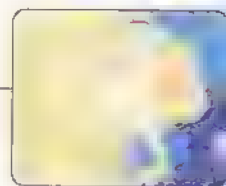
5 laughing the minions of the Dark One, on any occasion, can be a tiresome and often tedious affair. No sooner have you hacked your way through one wave of evil incarnate than you're met with more foe, all of whom will gladly give up their lives - if they ever had one - for one last glorious swipe at you. You know how persistent the Devil's own can be. And they're certainly that in *Herc's Adventures*.

Your 'Quest' in *Herc's* is to save the beautiful Persephone, the goddess of fertility. She has been kidnapped by Hades, king of the underworld, and is being held captive in his lair. You are tough guy Hercules (whose father was a god, as he often points out), a giant of a man and a courageous fighter. Or alternatively you may be bow and arrow girl, Atlanta, who can fell an entire horde with one carefully aimed rain of arrows from her quiver. Or, as another option, you can be pucky little sling-shot Jason, of the Golden Fleece fame. Each character is very different, and in gameplay terms this means they combine well as partners in the Quest.

In trying to save Persephone you often meet gods along the way and can interact with the local peasantry, some of whose information can be very useful. The game's characters are indeed plentiful: lots of non-player characters, 'family' (RPG speak for animal friends), and a box of killer frogs to be had, if you can afford them.

The presence of so many characters means that the gameplay itself builds slowly - you are gradually introduced to the buttons' functions and so anyone even if they've never picked up a PlayStation in their life will find this easy to follow. Once accustomed to the rudiments of playing, you and your mate charge around a series of mazes, reducing your enemies' hit points to zero, making yourself some save points in the process, and eventually moving up a level. It's all very simple stuff, but in the main it's also rather boring. Luckily, however, your interest in the lighthearted *Herc's Adventures* is frequently rejuvenated by some clever ideas and attention to detail.

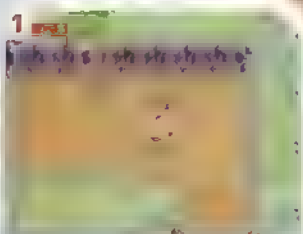
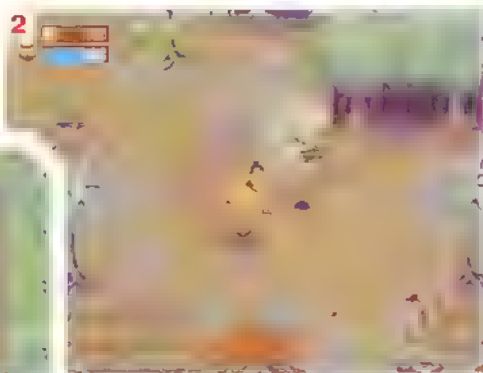
The game's movement of your own character is fluid, and although you can't jump and shoot at the





■ PUBLISHER:	Virgin Interactive Ent.	■ DEVELOPER:	LucasArts
■ RELEASE DATE:	Out now	■ ORIGIN:	United States
■ PRICE:	£44.99	■ STYLE:	RPG/platform puzzler

[1] Hurling tree stumps. [2] That woman is a witch, and a vicious one too. [3] A blue-bearded Hades. [4] No, don't turn back - it's a trick.



same time, the background looks smooth, even when you run. There is one problem with the graphics, however: occasionally you get caught in a skirmish which is going on in a blind spot, and as you can't change your viewpoint, you just have to keep hitting out like a man possessed until it is hush. Continuing in a positive vein, though, some of the sounds are excellent, and as well as the battle cries you get a huge *kersplash!* if you go for a swim.

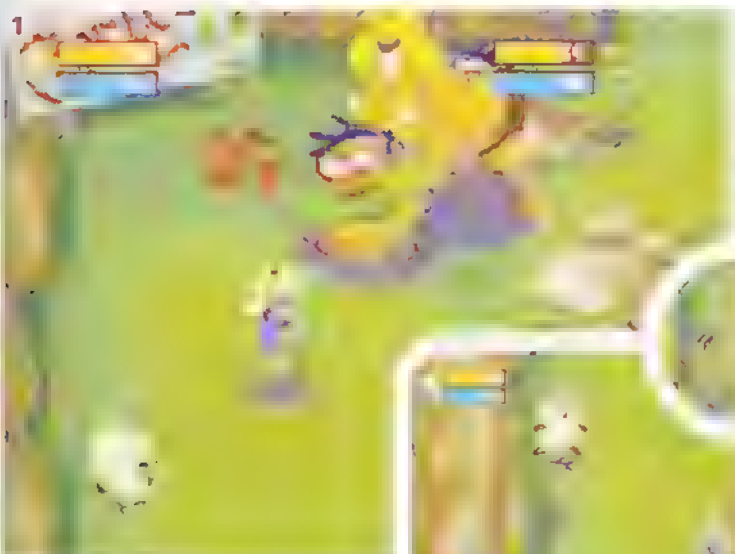
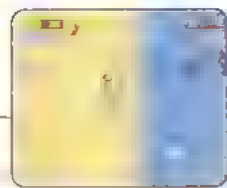
In terms of the role-playing element, *Herc's* is fairly well reproduced, even if it is a Greek *Dungeons And Dragons*. At certain points throughout you must make game-changing decisions, and there are various ways to save Persephone, which gives the game a closer role-playing feel than many genuine RPGs. And although *Herc's* is still basically a maze platformer with a few puzzles and quirks, these are inspired enough and well enough executed to make it a decent social game.

Indeed, even death is fun: you descend into the place where you battle the undead and as the numbers

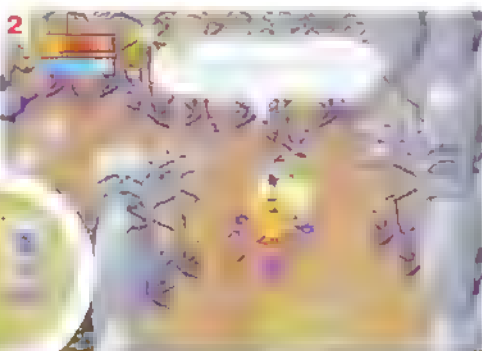
necessary... as the battles often get too

are huge, you just end up hacking your way through them and try to make your unalike escape from Hades' cold clutches. **It would have been nice if you were taken there by a boatman, as Death ensued you across river,** but despite this departure from tradition, the atmosphere of Greek mythology is well maintained throughout the game, notably by the music and numerous clever ideas that surprise and amuse.

Finally worth mentioning is that the two-player option is almost necessary, rather than simply useful, as the battles often get too intense to handle alone. Ultimately this makes you wish for more characters and the chance to play with a decent sized party of adventurers. Had this been the case, then *Herc's Adventures* would have been even more of the family/social game that it aspired to be. Unfortunately it falls short.



[1] Being squeezed by a Cyclops makes your eyes bulge out. [2] An interesting proposition. [3] Jason at the village sheep-chucking competition. [4] Looks like old one-eye's bought the farm.



Alternatively...

To date there is nothing to compare with *Herc's Adventures* on the PlayStation.

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Magazine 26

■ GRAPHICS:

Smart sprites 7

■ GAMEPLAY:

Entertaining 6

■ SOUND:

Occasionally brilliant 8

■ PRESENTATION:

Disney 9

■ LIFESPAN: Life has many various paths 7

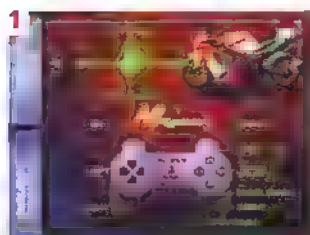
■ ORIGINALITY

Lots of new ideas 8

Herc's Adventures is a good, entertaining and simple introduction to RPGs, even though it's essentially a platformer with puzzles.

7
out of 10

PlayTest

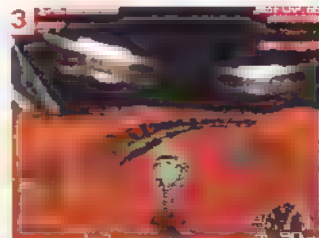


[1] A sexy road bike. This one's all top end and acceleration. But no grip. Very risky. [2] The equivalent off-road bike. [3] Choose this viewing mode and you'll be holding your breath as you flick through the corners. [4] A more conventional view.

Moto Racer

Fed up with joyriding in souped-up Escorts and F1 monsters?

Electronic Arts says get on your bike...



[1] Hit the turbo button on a road bike and you wheelie the machine. [2] Hit it when you're going over a jump on a motocross bike and you pull groovy stunts. [3] You can almost taste the mud.

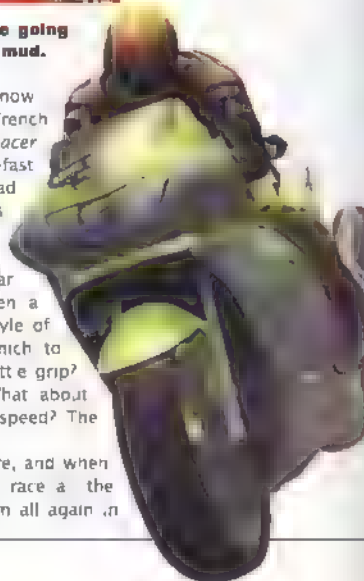


Moto Racer arrived on the PC, some months ago, to a tremendously favourable reaction. Indeed it's widely regarded as being THE motor cycle racer in town. But despite having a bountiful supply of four-wheeled automotive racers the PlayStation has yet to grab the bull by the cowhorns when it comes to two wheels. Yes, we've had the chain-wielding *Road Rash* and the soon-forgotten *Moto X*, but we haven't really had the motorbike game



the console deserves. Until now. Developed by French outfit De Phine, *Moto Racer* offers not only super-fast and highly twitchy road bikes, but motocross bikes too. Not that you're given much of a choice as to which kind of bike to ride for a particular race - if you're in the dirt arena, then a motocross bike it is. But with each style of bike, there are a few options from which to choose. Do you want a fast fella with little grip? A slow fella that hugs the corners? What about massive acceleration but a slower top speed? The choice depends on your riding style.

There are plenty of tracks to race here, and when you win the Championship (where you race all the tracks sequentially) you get to race them all again.

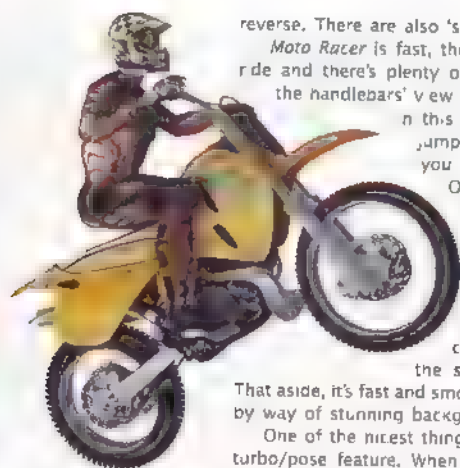


...turbo/pose feature. When you're powering!

...your rider lifts the front wheel.



PUBLISHER:	Electronic Arts	DEVELOPER:	Delphine
RELEASE DATE:	Out now	ORIGIN:	France
PRICE:	£39.99	STYLE:	Motorbike racer

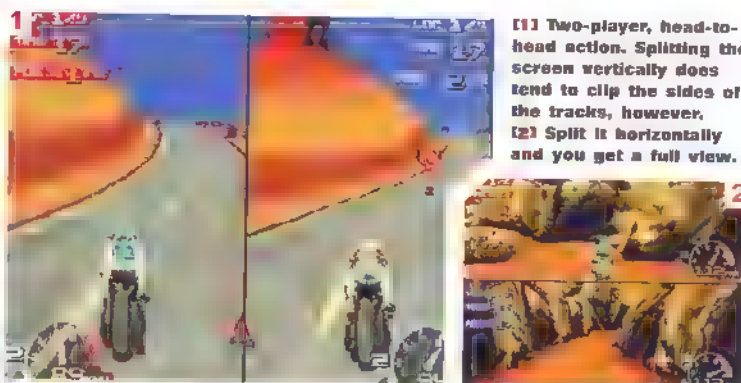


reverse. There are also 'secret' circuits to discover. *Moto Racer* is fast, the courses are a lot of fun to ride and there's plenty of viewing modes. The 'from the handlebars' view is superb. Get on a bike and in this mode you'll find the screen jumping all over the place as you bounce around the track.

On a road bike the view judders wonderfully as you power through a corner right on the limit. There are a couple of graphical oddities, though, the most noticeable being when you crash your rider falls around the screen most unconvincingly. That aside, it's fast and smooth but nothing outstanding by way of stunning backgrounds, or whatever.

One of the nicest things added to the game is the turbo/pose feature. When you're powering along, hit the turbo button (Circle) and your rider lifts the front wheel and gives it some more welly. This is great if you're on a straight, but can be very dangerous on even the slightest bend because it makes you very crash friendly. But get on an off-road bike and utilising the turbo button becomes even more fun. It's still here to be used for a bit of a boost, but pressing the button when your rider's in the air causes him to start messing about. He'll take his hands off the handlebars, lift himself off the seat, do one-handed salutes and a whole load of other, essentially useless but great fun, poses.

Moto Racer really comes to life when you race a friend in the two-player, split screen mode. Because the circuits are reasonably wide, and unless your opponent is significantly more competent at the wheel, you're



(1) Two-player, head-to-head action. Splitting the screen vertically does tend to clip the sides of the tracks, however. (2) Split it horizontally and you get a full view.



in two-player, split-screen mode, you're!

always within reachable distance of one another. The screen can be split either vertically or horizontally – though in vertical split-screen mode, one side of the track tends to be obscured slightly.

Delphine has made a fine fist of the circuits, too, providing a great deal of variety. Fancy a race along the Great Wall of China? You got it.

The tarmac circuits are the fastest on the block, and you can bounce up and down along the muddy tracks. And there's a noticeable difference not only in how the various types of bike handle, but also how variations between bikes of the same class change the way you ride a circuit. Pick the wrong road bike, for example, and you not only finish at the back of the pack, you're a way off the pace. Pick the right one, however, and you can find yourself leading the group. Talking of the other riders, the programmers have made them as real as possible, so they don't romp miles ahead of you but provide a decent challenge for the skill level chosen.

Moto Racer is no simulation, this is pure arcade racing and it's serious fun (the only real niggles being that both players have to reach a checkpoint within the right time limits to be able to continue). With little competition from other bike racing games, Delphine (and EA) have got the track to themselves and they should find plenty of prospective riders waiting to sign up.



(1) Part of the splendid intro sequence. (2) The Great Wall is much shorter on a motorbike. (3) Now would be a good time for a quick dab on the turbo button. Leave the stunts for when you're mid-air (but not when you're going into a corner).



Alternatively...

<i>Moto Racer</i>	8/10	PSM7
<i>Road Rash</i>	8/10	PSM3
<i>Jet Rider</i>	7/10	PSM7

VERDICT

GRAPHICS:	Functional 7	GAMEPLAY:	Thrills and spills 8
SOUND	Hear that engine scream 7	PRESENTATION	Some fine circuits 5
LIFESPAN	You can always go faster 8	ORIGINALITY:	Hardly 2

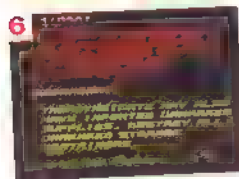
This arcade racer's going to get the adrenaline pumping and keep it flowing. One you'll want to get your knees down on a lot (that's racing speak, apparently).

8

out of 10

Playtest

[1] As you can see, this 2D shooter has 3D elements. [2] The graphics, though simple, are atmospheric. [3] Armstrong gets lifted to safety after his latest heroics. [4] These two evil mothers on the right of the screen quickly begin to piss you off... [5] Jungle in the area! Yeh, man. [6] A tall order... [7] Agent Armstrong, looking suitably square-jawed and fearless. [8] The calling card of the evil Syndicate...



Agent Armstrong

This neat little platformer-cum-shoot 'em up is a real blast from the past, incorporating quaint graphics and a return to old-fashioned arcade-style gameplay values. Is it just a bit too archaic, though?

You're Agent Armstrong. The year is 1935. The world is threatened by a SPECTRE style outfit known as The Syndicate. The infamous gangster 'Spats' Falconetti, is the evil mastermind behind it all and his dastardly plans for world domination, using the latest military hardware, seem certain to succeed unless you can stop him with some Harrison Ford/Bruce Willis type antics. Naturally you're the world's last and only hope, but if you're also the kind of super-hero who likes to look at the small print before you agree to go off saving the world, then you should keep reading.

What you're looking at here is your basic platform style shoot 'em up. It's not pretty; it's not a puzzler; you just walk and jump about, killing enemy soldiers and blowing up enemy bases - you know the score. All of this

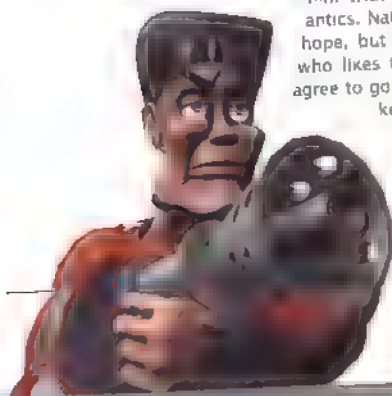
action is also simply two dimensional with a little room for 3D movement and shooting.

There are thirty-odd levels to *Agent Armstrong* in all though you don't have to get through them all to save the world - just most of them. To complete the game, and indeed defeat the Syndicate, you need to collect all the usual health, ammunition and weapon power-ups as you progress through the levels. Unfortunately it's as simple as that.

On the plus side, there are a variety of mission arenas. Docks, Jungle, Airfield, industrial, Cave and

missing, as is any platform pleasure. After

flashiness, that *Agent* lacks most.





■ PUBLISHER: Virgin ■ DEVELOPER: King of the Jungle
 ■ RELEASE DATE: November ■ ORIGIN: UK
 ■ PRICE: £44.99 ■ STYLE: Platform/shoot 'em up



[1] This is the shooting gallery, where you can loosen up before setting off on your next raid. [2] Lying down on the job. [3] The end-of-level bosses can be quite a handful... [4] 'Are you listening, Armstrong? This is your next target. Do not fail us...' [5] The 'Agency' headquarters [6] Come on, then! Let's be 'aving ya!

Underwater. And at the end of the higher levels, there are the usual heavies to deal with. There's a tank, for instance, a gyrocopter, and a huge robot, all of which need a fair bit of punishment before they go down.

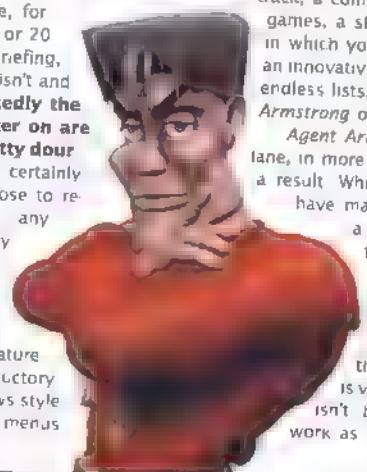
But is that enough to save this game, as this hero agent attempts to save the world? Well, no. *Agent Armstrong* isn't a great title by any stretch of the imagination, despite an instant accessibility which suggests that it might be. Initially you're in there shooting baddies and you're not bothered that the graphics are a bit ropy (even if this is a deliberate attempt to capture an old-fashioned arcade feel), you've got a mission to complete and you don't mind that it isn't a particularly exciting one. It's only after you've successfully completed a few operations that the game's limitations begin to sink in.

For a start, some of the missions really are quite tedious. There's one jungle adventure, for example, where you must destroy 15 or 20 enemy units. Fine, you think after your briefing, that sounds like fun. Unfortunately it isn't and it takes rather a long time. **Admittedly the fights against the big fellas later on are much more full-on, but some pretty dour adventures lie in between.** It's certainly not the kind of game where you choose to redo a level just for the sheer joy of it - any hint of battle lust is missing, as is any platform pleasure. After a while you realise that it's empathy, not flashiness, that *Agent* lacks most; it makes you feel like an observer rather than a player.

Perhaps *Agent's* only really good feature is its start-up. After the initial introductory hokum complete with a Pathe News style sequence, you find yourself not among menus

but in a tall building. This is the 'Agency' HQ and you must guide Armstrong around its rooms to get his mission briefing. Dotted around the place you'll find a jukebox, which you can get to play a suitably stirring track, a computer on which to load and save games, a shooting gallery and a map room in which you'll find your mission details. It's an innovative touch that makes a change from endless lists, but it's still not enough to raise Armstrong out of mediocrity.

Agent Armstrong is a trip down memory lane, in more ways than one, but it suffers as a result. Which is a pity, as the developers have made a genuine attempt to create a comic strip style adventure with the emphasis on playability. But while a bit of nostalgia is all well and good, most gamers will want more for their money - unfortunately *Agent* is little more than a standard platformer which is visually impressive and isn't bloodthirsty enough to work as a shoot 'em up.



Alternatively...

BLAM! Machinehead	8/10	PSM1
Loudal	7/10	PSM2
Refused	7/10	PSM4
Fire & Knives	6/10	PSM4
Reptil Reload	5/10	PSM1
Agent Armstrong	4/10	PSM26

VERDICT

■ GRAPHICS: Not good enough 4 ■ GAMEPLAY: Deliberately basic 5
 ■ SOUND: Stirring music, poor effects 4 ■ PRESENTATION: Smart, innovative 7
 ■ LIFESPAN: Big. Boring in parts 5 ■ ORIGINALITY: Quirky but unoriginal 4

Despite some decent end-of-level scraps, most people will find this too old-fashioned for its own good. Poor graphics and basic gameplay leave you dissatisfied.

4
out of 10



**NEVER UNDERESTIMATE
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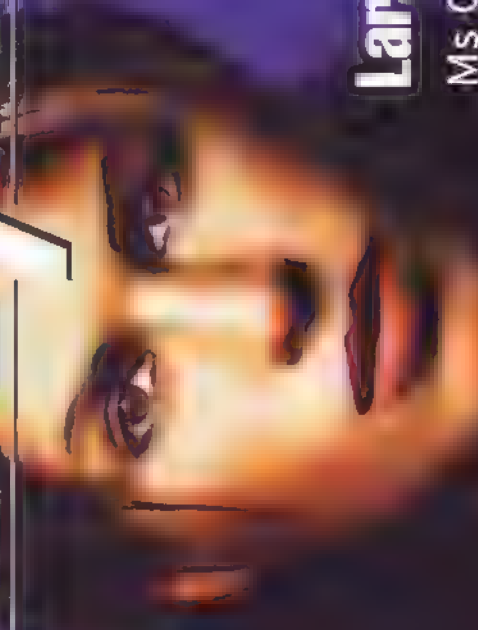
PlayStation

From the makers of
**Official UK
PlayStation
Magazine**

Essential PlayStation™

Part Five

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THE BEST PLAYSTATION GAMES IN THE WORLD EVER... **PART FIVE!**

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[1] Tunnels are a favoured addition to the landscape in *Air Race*. [2] The finish line. A welcome sight. [3] Life's a beach. Apparently. [4] A close call. [5] Sigh. Another tunnel, then.

Air Race

Knowing very well that *Ridge Racer* cannot be beaten (probably), *Air Race* arrives on the PlayStation with an unusual take on the racing genre...

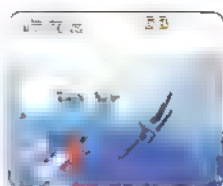
Well, if DePhine's current bike-fied, speed-fest, *Moto Racer*, was trying to add something to the oft-trodden boards of the racing game, then this, THQ's latest, is opting to redefine the contours of the whole genre. Marrying the mechanics of the racer with the whims of the flight sim, *Air Race*, it has to be said, does at least have a good stab at something new.

Its basic objective, of course, is the same as every other win-at-all-costs racing game: start at the back, make your way to the front and progress on to the next – and harder – course. At its core, it is a racing game, but the logistics of vehicular activity at 1,000 ft also means that *Air Race* differs quite significantly from the likes of *Ridge Racer* and *V-Rally*.

First up, there's a pleasingly rotund 11 different planes to peruse (after by-passing the game's wholly unspectacular FMV intro). Two of these are reserved for those who manage to clock up first places on each of the four tracks but the rest – with Blighty's own Spitfire

and futuristic battle-plane the Sinden among them are more than ready to be taken out for a spin.

In air flight is, for the most part, finely handled. There is some annoying 'drift' (subsequently meaning you have to quite often re-align your plane as you're about to swoop into a tight cavern) but the craft feels heavy, responding excellently to your various button-pushes. Naturally this means that you're not penalised for clipping scenery so unintentional crash landings are kept to a minimum. That said, enemy AI seems particularly geared towards your untimely demise. Pass a fellow competitor, make a mistake and he'll come whapping back at your tailgate, just waiting for you to inadvertently pay a visit to that local cliff face. In fairness, you're allowed a decent slab



Not only is there enough rough and tumble to sustain any would-be Biggles attention but the invention in scenery is superb.



PUBLISHER:	T-HQ	DEVELOPER:	In-house
RELEASE DATE:	Out now	ORIGIN:	United States
PRICE:	£39.99	STYLE:	Racing/Flight sim

On course



Mountain

Eases you into the game with friendly bends and sizeable tunnel systems.



Snow Land

Waterfalls, snow drifts, crystal clear waters. The best-looking course.



South City

Swoop between buildings and then out into the greenery of the valleys beyond.



Canyon

The orange rock of the American Midwest as well as some cunning hairpin bends.



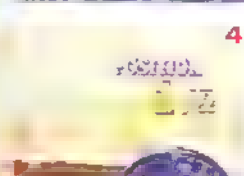
of hits before you explode in Richter scale-trembling fashion, but it's something to be weary of, in any case. The courses themselves are impressively designed. Not only is there enough rough and tumble to sustain any would-be biggest attention but the variation and invention in scenery is superb. Minuscule rock tunnels, narrow mountain passes and sky-high townscapes are certainly the most popular geographical additions, but there's also a plethora of other smartly thought-out ways to fox you and your airborne efforts.

But, for all that's good in the game, there's also a number of fundamental flaws. Firstly, anyone with even a sprinkling of joystick-style skills will soar through the game's challenge. Yes, the four courses sweat entertainment but they're so short and so easy to master that, before long, you've accessed the two extra planes and seen and finished the game.

Secondly, the fact that your flight path doesn't have the linear feel of a road, means that often proceedings feel distinctly sparse of action. Even if your opponents do do the best to send you home hospital-bound, *Air Race*



(1) Some two-player magic really knocks the game into shape. (2) Though, the lack of tracks means, essentially, it exudes the same faults as the one-player. (3) Rocks, you'll find, will prove a sizeable thorn in the side. (4) Although the thin passageways between buildings will also prove testing.



Race really doesn't have enough going on to warrant the sort of heart-pumping, shout-out-loud energy that *Ridge* and *Rage Racer* exuded in spades.

The question, of course, is how do you remedy this? Well, considering that, essentially, *Air Race* has more in common with *Wipeout* than either of the *Racers*, a weapons option might have solved the problem. Then at least it would have added a smidgen of difficulty and it would have given the game a secondary objective to master.

Finally, as a lesson in How To Do Pop-Up, *Air Race* is the user's manual. It was always going to be a difficult thing to suppress in a game of this type, but it's so bad at times that it's deceiving. Often you'll be hurtling through a tunnel, able to see its end, then find it suddenly growing another 100 metres.

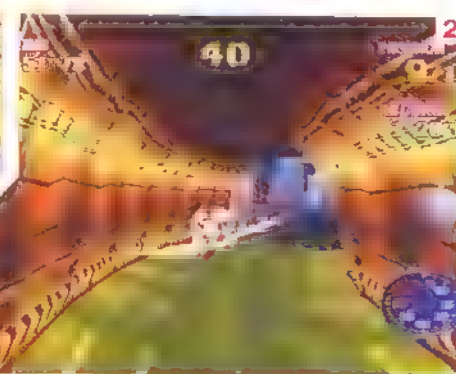
But, for all that, *Air Race* is still a top-rate performer. The idea is such a good one and the execution, mostly, so competent that it's still worthy of investment. It'll certainly never trouble the upper echelons of the genre but, like the Spitfire itself, its shortcomings are equalled out by its solid, workmanlike appearance. If you don't fancy it now, wait until it winds its way into the bargain bins.

Alternatively...

Wipeout 2007	9/10	PSM2
Wipeout	8/10	PSM1
Air Race	7/10	PSM2/3
Wipeout	8/10	PSM3



(1) Static, the visuals look magnificent. (2) In-game you'll cringe at the pop-up, though. Here, the tunnel hasn't actually ended.



Official UK
PlayStation
Magazine 26

GRAPHICS:	Pop-up mars great look 7	GAMEPLAY:	The feel of flight is superb 8
SOUND:	Average FX, rubbish music 5	PRESENTATION:	Poor in general 6
LIFESPAN:	Too short. Shame, really 5	ORIGINALITY:	Splendidly idea-packed 8

Its faults are as (aigh) plain as day, but that still doesn't prevent *Air Race* from being a robust, smart, fun-filled racing game. Pleasantly surprising.

7
out of 10

Playtest

Final Fantasy VII

Less of a video game, more a way of life. Get into Square's latest and finest slice of storytelling and you may find that reality only scores a meagre 7/10 by comparison....



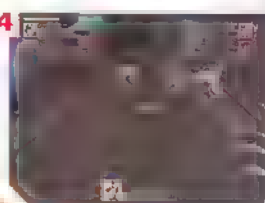
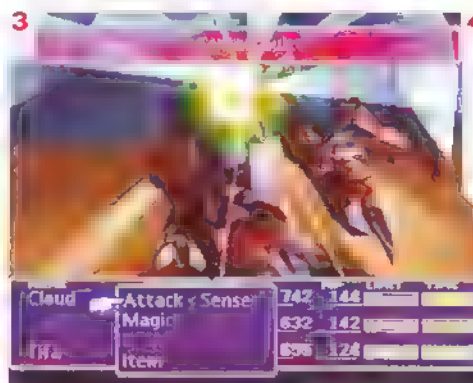
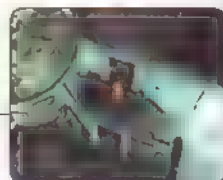
Every so often, a game comes along that forces you to reassess your critical standards. A game that, in this case, kept over one hundred hand-picked and head-hunted development staff slaving away for more than two years. A game by Square, one of the most accomplished and understanding software houses in the world. It's a game that the anoraks will try to keep to themselves, but which ordinary challenge-loving PlayStation owners should invade and explore by the steam-driven coachload.

Within half an hour of starting *Final Fantasy VII* you'll see your PlayStation doing things it's never done before. Stuff you probably didn't even know it *could* do. A mind-melting, jaw-droppy brand of eye glue that has you comparing innocent passers-by and shouting 'Wha...? Would you - look - at - that!'

To help fill you in, take a good long stare at some of our more elaborate screenshots. The general game environment uses those increasingly familiar pre-rendered CGI backdrops which your polygon-described

character can trundle around at will, examining objects and searching for

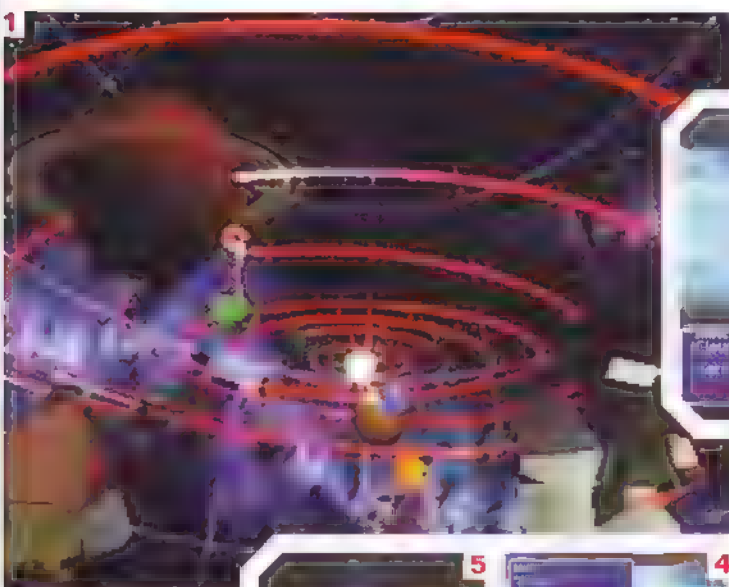
those vital hot spots. The attention to detail is such that, if you're using a SCART lead, your TV seems to take on the resolution of a monitor. **But these locations are far more advanced than anything you've seen in, say, *Resident Evil* - Instead of static wallpaper, each one is packed with animations and effects.** Neon flickers and buzzes; strange machines spin, rumble and whirr; valves hiss plumes of steam, TV screens cycle through adverts or crackle with news broadcasts. Hit a switch and you may suddenly find you've operated a lift, prompting yet another seamless FMV mini-sequence over which the polygon characters remain visible throughout. Disk access? What disk access?



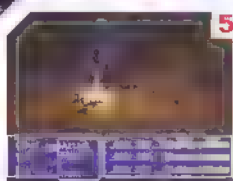
(1) Playing out Cloud's flashback. (2) Not a sensible place to wave a wet stick. (3) After taking repeated hits, unleash your fury in a Limit Break attack. (4) More G-bike scrapping.



PUBLISHER:	SCEE	DEVELOPER:	Square
RELEASE DATE:	November	ORIGIN:	Japan
PRICE:	£44.99	STYLE:	RPG

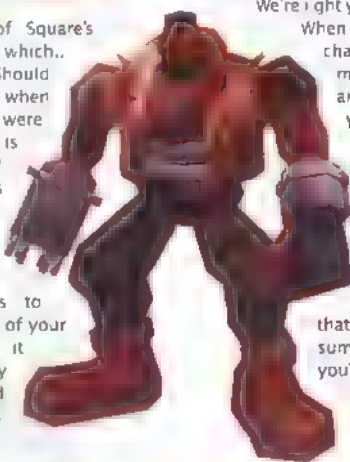


(1) Bugenhagen's holographic orrery (cough) juxtaposes FMV with animated polygon folk. (2) 'Oh, cobras.' (3) *Akira* meets *Road Rash* in this sub-game to protect your three-wheeling buddies from marauding bikers. (4) No, it really is as dodgy as it looks. (5) Group action of a very different nature.



Yet this is just one aspect of Square's incredible magnum opus, an RPG which..

No, wait, come back Curses. Should have known that would happen when those three arcane letters were conjoined. Yes, *Final Fantasy VII* is more than just a *Broken Sword* style adventure with a few puzzles to solve after conversing with bizarre characters. At the heart of the experience is a sophisticated battle engine in which you use menu choices to determine the actions and tactics of your raggle-taggle party. Although it seems simple at first, the discovery of new fighting techniques and magical effects gradually adds



layer upon layer of complexity to your options. By the end of the game, you'll find yourself spending half an hour just looking over your equipment list and re-jigging minor elements for optimum efficiency.

We're eight years away from *Dungeon Master*, though.

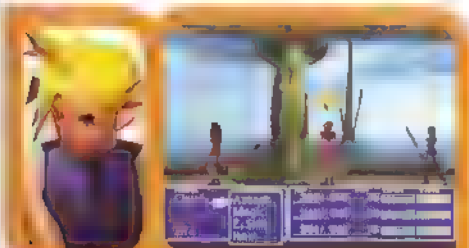
When you encounter enemy forces, the game changes mode to show a fully 3D texture-mapped locale in which the camera spins and circles to show dynamic views of your brave warriors and the curiously imaginative monsters you must defeat to improve your skills. Every dodge, sword swipe, gunshot and conjuring gesture is graphically portrayed, negating the need for text explanations.

We don't want to give too much away, but when you see some of the creatures (from a bestiary of hundreds) that dwarf your heroes, or the spells that summon titans and demigods to your aid, you'll wonder just why nothing else on the Playstation – or a £2000 PC, for that matter – has ever come close.

else on the PlayStation

has ever come close

Heroes with hang-ups



Cloud: Once a proud member of the military outfit **SOLDIER**, now haunted by memories of past events. You'll spend most of Disc 1 guessing just what happened in the Nibelheim Mako Reactor when Sephiroth should have killed him. Cue dream sequences, voices in the head, the flames, the flames...

Hairsty Van de Graf Generator (£89.99)



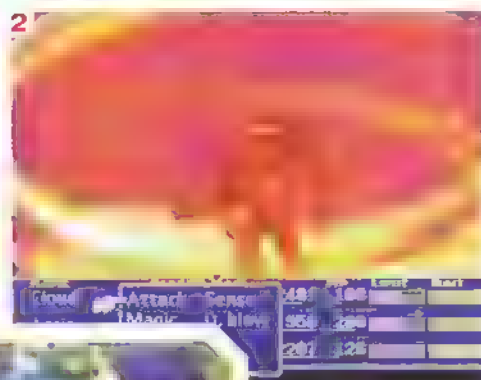
Barret: Is it the enormous physique? Perhaps the absence of a right arm in favour of a bloody great machine gun? Or is it just the uneasy spelling of Barret with ONE 'T' that upsets us and makes us treat this unlikely eco-terrorist with caution? Shoot first, then reload, THEN ask questions, is his politest protocol.

Manicure by Black & Decker (£54.75)

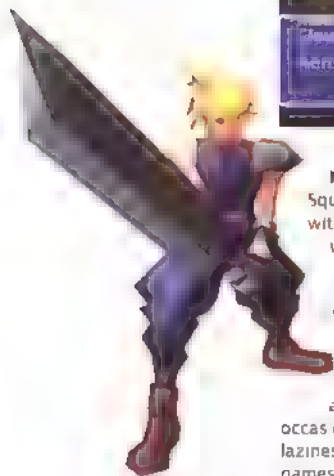
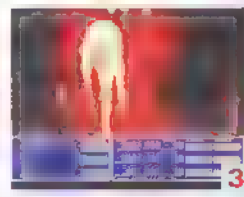
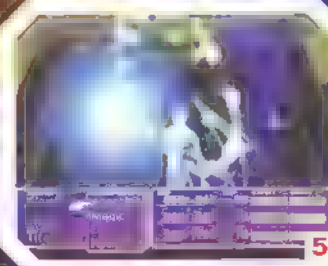


Aeris: Descended from an ancient race, Aeris wields a mean quarterstaff. But her role complicates the dialogue responses in an unusual way – will Cloud fall for childhood mate Tifa, or the lovely alien flower girl? There's no small echo of Terra from *FFIII* in Yoshitaka Amano's distinctive character design.

Accessories by Sainsbury's Homebase (£12.50)



(1) Magic is accessed through the use of Materia - crystals which can summon elemental creatures like the none-too-effete Ifrit (2), grant new abilities, or let you cast spells on enemies in battle (3). The superb animations for these summonings aren't FMV (4), but the direction is so stunning (5) that you never tire of watching Shiva's ice blast or the Divine Judgement of ol' beardy Ramuh (6).



► A few shortcuts have been made, however. Square's composers have always treated game music with the importance it deserves, but the *Final Fantasy VII* soundtrack doesn't take up as much of those three discs as you might think. It's so cleverly scored that few players will notice how much of it is actually produced electronically through the sound chip, rather than streamed from CD.

That said, though, the sound is the weakest aspect of *FFVII*. Excellent as it is, there just aren't enough different battle themes to avoid the occasional sense of repetition, and it seems more like laziness than in-joke to re-use samples from previous games like *Final Fantasy III* and *Chrono Trigger*.

If you remember those times, and consider yourself a Square fan, you've probably been waiting for *Final Fantasy VII* with a mixture of eagerness and apprehension. Well, allay your fears. There's a different mood to earlier installments - slicker, more style-conscious, less focussed - and the personal histories aren't quite as involving at first. Give it time. The characters are every bit as detailed and expressive as before, often more so, and you will eventually fall for some of the truly emotive plot twists. In short, you won't be disappointed - far from it.

If this means nothing to you, don't imagine for a second that you'll be missing out by not having played earlier *Final Fantasy* titles, though. Besides the name Square's *Final Fantasy* games are only vaguely linked, in the sense that they share a common set of elements. Some players may feel familiar with certain battle



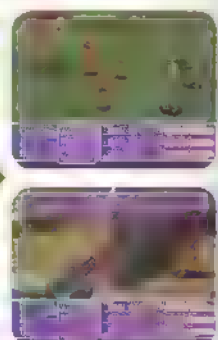
(1) Even using the new hot-spot highlighter (that green arrow) on SELECT, this looks like a dead end. But climb on to the driver's plate, (2) and you can shunt the trains into a position for running across the carriages (3).

Action Time Battle



The strategy battle sequences are in real-time, so you've got to think quick and rattle off those command decisions before they become irrelevant. Should you cure your poisoned comrade now, or cast a protection spell on yourself in anticipation of the next assault? After performing an action, that character then has to wait until their 'ATB' meter fills before they can act again.

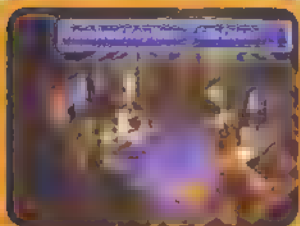
With experience, your party becomes more responsive. You can also equip items and cast spells that speed up allies or slow opponents, giving yourself more time to combine attacks or prepare defences.



Final Fantasy VII

Wall Street Crush

Racking down an old colleague brings you to the Wall Market, a slum district under the protection of small-time gang boss Don Corneo. Problem is, he refuses to see anyone except the young ladies who help to cure his insomnia (ahem). If you want an audience, you're going to need a plan - the sort of, leg-shaving, tissue-stuffed plan that's been propping up comedy sub-plots since Shakespeare's day...



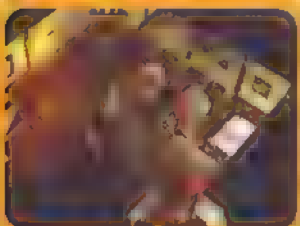
Clothes store

Under the direction of Aeris, you convince an alcoholic tailor to fashion something for the more triangular build. This is just the first step, and helps to get you into the Don's mansion. You also make lots of friends down at the gym, apparently...



Sushi bar

Choose well from the menu and you may win a ticket that can be exchanged for cosmetic and beauty products. The more luscious you look, the easier it will be to get into Don Corneo's mansion. Got the idea? Alright, then let's shop!



Hotel

Every town in *FFVII* will offer you the chance to rest and recuperate those lost hit points, or restore your magical powers with a little meditation. And as you're on a mission to save the world, they can hardly complain about a few missing *innards*.



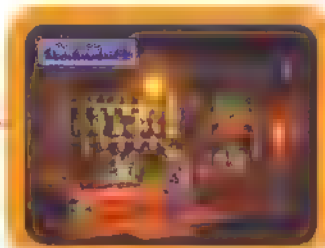
Don Corneo's mansion

Head north to the Don's mansion and the guard is more than simply fooled by your *femme fatale* guise. Reckon you're in, there.



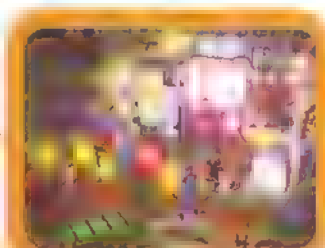
Gym

One of the bodybuilders has a wig you can borrow - but you're going to have to challenge him before he'll part with it. Remember, the world depends upon you.



Item shop

At last, a shop that sells items. Run a personal errand for this embarrassed urn merchant.

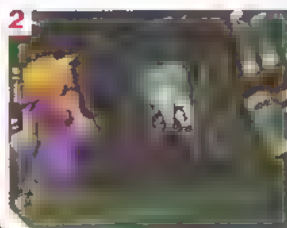
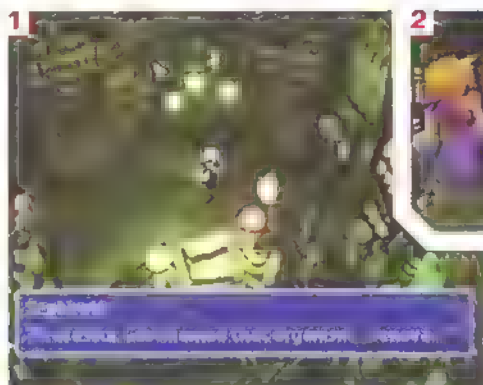
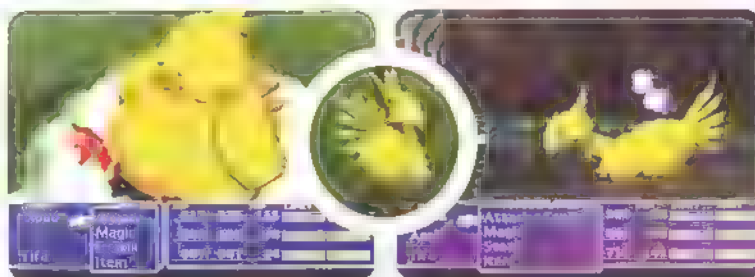


Whorehouse

When this chap guiltily parts with his pass for the 'Honey Bee Inn', you truly get a chance to explore your feminine side. Streuth!

Chocobos are go!

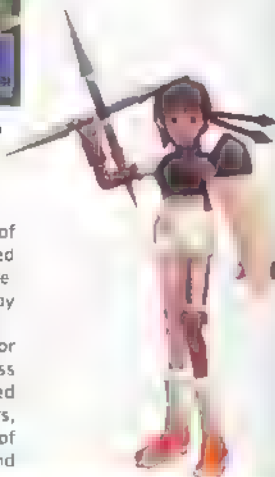
The words 'cute' and 'ostrich' aren't readily associated most of the time, but look again: one thing you can be sure of in *Final Fantasy* is a safe ride on a Chocobo. The feathered steeds are such a part of the FF mythos that they're rapidly overtaking the poor little Moogle as Square's favourite trademark critter, and even have their own theme tune (this year reworked in a surf guitar style). Head for the Gold Saucer tracks and you can have a flutter on the races, perhaps even become a jockey yourself, if you feel like it. *Koi* - did somebody say 'Bernie Clifton'?



[1] On a mission, Cloud's SOLDIER buddy Sephiroth discovers his true origin, [2] and the camera tripod isn't the only unstable item around here. [3] Patricide and eye-gouging can't be far behind.

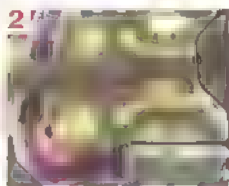
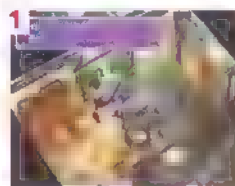
when searching Tifa's bedroom. There are a couple of times when you can guess something's been changed because the dialogue just doesn't make sense any more. And it might sound p.c.k.y, but you can really destroy a moment of tragedy with the word 'Juuuuurggh!!'

Rest assured, though, that none of these minor niggles will dampen your enjoyment. Occupying no less than three CDs, *Final Fantasy VII* can rightly be called an epic. Completion times average over 100 hours, although you may find yourself squandering some of that on its minor diversions. Constant dialogue and



mechanics or skills, and creatures such as the mythical Chocobo put in their regular appearances, but each instalment stands alone as a unique story set in a completely original gameworld.

Sadly, the translation isn't everything it could have been. Unless you're new to RPGs then you probably won't be surprised by the jarring Americanisms, the poor use of English, or the completely inappropriate excess of ellipsis ('...') and exclamations ('!!'). They've also changed several minor sections to use some uniquely Japanese dodgy humour. In the original, for example, the Wall Market vending machine wasn't selling 'tiaras', and Cloud didn't find 'orthopaedic' underwear



[1] Cloud, disguised as a Shinra trooper. You're about to be tested on your performance of military formations... [2] A trail of blood and dead salarymen in the Shinra office building. Potentially, a clue. [3] 'I'm new in town, and I was wondering where you chaps buy your, er, your...' [4] The guts of a Mako Reactor. [5] Well, we checked it and, yep, it was on fire all right.

Final Fantasy VII

Ah, if you could only edit all the FMV together into one movie. When you appreciate who Sephiroth is, and just what they've done to his closest relatives, you'd understand why he's several pipettes short of a chemistry set. He makes a pretty dashing villain, though. Or is he? OR IS HE? Etc.



combat would be dull so, cleverly, your interest is sustained with a splendid sub-game mentality. At all possible opportunities, a simple plot event will be turned into a mini-game to test your wits or reflexes. When you disguise yourself in an enemy uniform, for instance, you have to perform the same parade formations as the other soldiers to evade detection. In many of these sections, outstanding achievements will secure special items, as well as determining the direction of the story, so quitting and reloading for another attempt is a common occurrence.

If anything, *Final Fantasy VII* is almost too lavish. The hero protagonist, Cloud, will wander casually through yet another stunning

Final Fantasy VII can rightly be called an epic.

over 100 hours.

location, exchange a few words with his adventuring colleagues, then move on. And you'll never see that backdrop again for the rest of the game. You can even miss whole FMV scenes that only occur in secret places. Technically speaking, it puts every other PlayStation title to shame – bar none. And many of the sub-games are so accomplished that they compare favourably to commercial releases. Yes, it really is that impressive.

It's not even as if it relies on these touches. Like all previous Square efforts, it's the strength of the narrative that holds your deepest interest in concluding the adventure. What at first seems to be another clichéd rebel vs-empire plot soon develops into a tale of dying planets, ancient races, divided loyalties, genetic tampering, love, betrayal and insanity – with a spot of cross-dressing on the side.

The only remaining worry rests with the reaction of British gamers. It's not a problem for the Japanese and even the Americans have now acquired the taste, but attaching any kind of kudos to strategic menu-driven combat is still a fried egg/Teflon scenario over here. All we can do is urge you to give a try. If anything's going to distract us from our obsession with beat 'em ups, sports cars and football, this is it. *Final Fantasy VII* is a videogaming *tour de force*, opening up whole new horizons for the potential of the PlayStation, and shouldn't be overshadowed by this month's other 10/10 StarPlayer. In years to come, they'll celebrate this as one of the all-time classics...



Alternatively...

You don't need to bother with anything else.

Oh, it's only a model



In the innocent days of 16-bit, exploring the world usually meant walking a cutesy sprite across a 2D map of badly-drawn mountains and poorly-scaled castles. And so it seems here – but press a button and *FFVII* suddenly reveals a rotating map of 3D contours, hills and valleys, roads that turn into bridges that span waterfalls. Nothing too ambitious, but remember – this is only the map screen. Wait till you see the vehicles...



Talk about contrasts. One moment you're hunting undead gods [1] in the stark metal hold of a cargo ship... [2] the next, you're looting around a holiday resort from *Leisure Suit Larry*. Gakk.

VERDICT

■ GRAPHICS: Frankly, we're speechless 10 ■ GAMEPLAY: So much to do 9
 ■ SOUND: Delicate chip loops 7 ■ PRESENTATION: Incredibly friendly 10
 ■ LIFESPAN: 100 hours plus replays 10 ■ ORIGINALITY: No princess to rescue 7

A compelling blend of complex storylines, stunning graphics and cerebral gameplay, *Final Fantasy VII* establishes a new standard of excellence for PlayStation games.

10

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Felony 11-79

At a time of increasing concern over car-related crime, ASCII Entertainment has decided to throw caution to the wind and produce a riotous, ram-raiding feast of felonious fun...



[1] The Mini. Good for driving through shopping centres, but frustratingly slow. **[2]** The amount of mayhem and destruction you can cause is staggering.



speed driving and extreme criminality and have stapled a flimsy story on the front to fend off the do-gooders. Nice try, but no banana.

There are three courses in *Felony*. The first Down Town level really sets the tone, starting with you crashing through a shop front, stealing a Jade statue, screaming back out and that's when you take control of the car. Next up you hurtle around collecting dynamite, crash straight through a shopping centre, ram through police road blocks... you get the picture. And all this is against the clock.

If you manage to complete the first two courses within the time limit, you get to try a third course. In the early stages of play, you only have a few vehicles to choose from – a truck, a saloon, a Mini and a Vespa are all that's on offer – but finish the first course and you get a few more. Finish the second and you get a few more still. But there are over 20 vehicles and only three courses, so how do you access the rest?

This is the evidence that would surely destroy the developer's defence if it ever went to court. The game rewards you not only for finishing a level, but also for going back in and causing as much damage to buildings, scenery and civilian vehicles as possible. Break enough speed limits, trash enough objects and ram enough Rozzers and you'll eventually get to see the entire range of vehicles (huge bus and F1-style car included). 'But...', cry the developers, 'it's made quite clear at the start that this is a virtual world and it's not real and that'. Sure y, then, it might have been better not to set the third level on the streets of Paris?

On yes, the game is dodgy all right. But it's also great fun. No accolades will be showered on it for its visuals, and with only three courses, it's also too short. But if you're looking for a refreshingly immoral break from the usual formulaic racers, it's well worth a look.



[1] Surely the only way to travel through the streets of Paris is on a scooter. **[2]** Things get a bit congested here. Should have taken the coastal road...

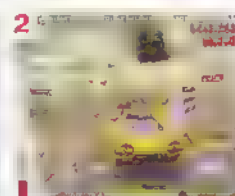
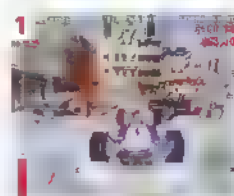
Oh dear. It's sadly inevitable that over the next few weeks we'll receive a steady stream of letters from 'Appalled of Tonbridge Wells', berating us for advocating delinquent and criminal behaviour. Why? Because the subject matter of *Felony 11-79* is decidedly dodgy and also because we can't help but think it's a huge gag.

Here's how *Felony* works. There's a sequence at the start which outlines the exploits of an archaeologist who discovered an old casket that supposedly contains a stash of valuable artefacts. However to open the casket three items are needed – a Jade Statue, a Golden Wing and a Silver Staff. You have been employed to retrieve these artefacts, having been chosen for your expertise in high-speed pursuit...

No, we didn't see the link either. The plot bubbles along nicely and then suddenly – bang – they talk about pursuit and car-related things. Basically what's happened is that some mischievous programmers have conceived this idea for a game that involves ram-raiding, high-

Alternatively...

<i>Destruction Derby 2</i>	6/10	PSM13
<i>Felony 11-79</i>	7/10	PSM26
<i>Twisted Metal</i>	7/10	PSM2
<i>Grand Prix</i>	8/10	PSM3
<i>Impact Racing</i>	6/10	PSM9



[1] Granted, an F1 car is a lot of fun. But not very practical as a runabout. **[2]** The parents are going to hate this. **[3]** At last. The dump truck is mine.

VERDICT

■ GRAPHICS	Slightly ropey but fine 7	■ GAMEPLAY:	It's a riot 8
■ SOUND	Sirens and smashing glass 7	■ PRESENTATION:	Not top notch 6
■ LIFESPAN	Three courses only 6	■ ORIGINALITY:	Extremely naughty 8

Theft, speeding, reckless driving... but it's all just harmless fun in a videogame. *Felony's* inadequate in many ways, yet the entertainment levels mask the flaws admirably.

7
out of 10

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■ PUBLISHER	JVC	■ DEVELOPER:	In-house
■ RELEASE DATE:	November	■ ORIGIN:	Japan
■ PRICE:	£34.99	■ STYLE:	Puzzle game

Tetris Plus

Strained eyes, thumb cramps, and smashed joypads. Yep, *Tetris* is back. But with the current shape of the sophisticated PlayStation market, does it really fit anymore?

(1, 2) Two-player versus mode. Don't let your man get spiked. (3) All the game options you could ever ask for. (4) Things start to go mental in the puzzle mode. (5) One-player puzzle action.



monotony of the gameplay does. The one problem with this straightforward mode, though, is that the speed is somewhat sporadic. No sooner has a level started than the game is trying to drop bricks quicker than a clumsy builder. It becomes far too fast, far too quickly, and by the time it slows down, you'll be in too much trouble to recover properly. And the reward for progressing through the levels? A new background picture. Cheers.

The saving grace of *Tetris Plus* actually comes from the 'Plus' in the form of the Puzzle and Versus modes. In Puzzle mode you have to clear blocks so that a small on-screen professor can make it to the appropriate exit. It's the same kind of action, but the addition of a little man and lots of level configurations gives the old game a new lease of life. As well as the normal wall-building, you have to contend with the ceiling lowering and your little bloke scrambling around, adding a whole new dimension to the gameplay.

The Versus mode, on the other hand, echoes *Bust A Move* in so far as whatever lines you remove from your screen get added to your opponent's side. Finally, the one other mode allows you to design your own levels. It's really just a cosmetic addition, however, as it serves next to no purpose: you're never going to design something too hard when you have a dedicated puzzle mode to take care of that, are you?

If it wasn't for the excellent Puzzle and Versus modes this would simply be *Tetris*, and with the likes of *Bust-A-Move 2* dominating the genre, this simply isn't recommendation enough.



Alternatively...

<i>Bust-A-Move 2</i>	1/19	PS98
<i>Tetris Plus</i>	8/10	PS98



(1) A brief bit of storyline for you to ignore. (2) Just in case you didn't realise who was winning...

Just when your eyes had recovered from playing too many hours of *Tetris*, JVC have gone and brought the damn thing back. *Tetris 'Plus'* is a throwback to the old days of the original *Tetris* but, as the suffix suggests, it has a little something extra. At the heart of the product, however, remains the simple pleasure to be had from arranging falling blocks into neat little piles. After all, while games like *Bust-A-Move 2* may have broadened the puzzling formula with graphical niceties and gameplay twists, there are still some people who long for a bit of tessellation.

The original game needs no introduction - it's the tried and-tested formula of riddling lines of blocks before you they pile up out of control and you reach the top. It's as entertaining as ever, even though the music's enough to drive you to distraction long before the

VERDICT

■ GRAPHICS:	Jolly but not pedestrian 7	■ GAMEPLAY:	Simple and addictive 8
■ SOUND:	Hateful muzac 4	■ PRESENTATION:	Clever extra modes 7
■ LIFESPAN:	Still going strong 8	■ ORIGINALITY:	Variations on a theme 4

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Tetris Plus is a sound enough *Tetris* clone but *Bust-A-Move 2* is far more fun. And let's face it, there are few surprises to be had with *Tetris*.

6
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A promotional image for the PlayStation 2 game 'Formula 1'. The image features a racing car in the background, a driver in a racing suit in the foreground, and a large '97' in the bottom right corner. The text 'Formula 1' and 'PlayStation' are visible in the bottom left corner. A price tag of '£39.99' is displayed at the top center.

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NHL '98

Hockey games are rather popular with game developers. But with EA's revamped ice 'n' slice classic now on the shelves, will the rest just be **wasting their time?**



1 Close in on the knock-kneed goalie and slap that puck right where it hurts. **2** As per usual with EA sports sims, the star defines who's in charge. **3** Looks lonely, doesn't he? Bless. **4** More one-on-one action with that puck looking goalbound. **5** 'Now, I insist you hand me that puck or must I take to you with my stick of power?'



For those who fancy an afternoon of thrashing each other with sticks yet aren't too struck on the resulting evening in casualty, there is really only one option - *NHL '97*. Released over a year ago, *NHL '97* is a bona fide classic but also provides the opportunity to quest on Electronic Arts' habit of rejigging their sports sims every other week. Yes, such constant revamping makes perfect marketing sense and in the case of *FIFA '97*, was a welcome revision of a lacklustre original. However as the disappointing *John Madden '97* proved, already perfect games should be left well alone.

So have EA screwed up an established winner with unnecessary frills? No way. If *NHL '97* was superb then *NHL '98* is double superb with an attractive veneer

constructed from high on 250 polygons, players texture mapped so accurately that even facial expressions and the names on the players' shirts are clearly visible.

The one thing that really denotes EA's sequel however is the sound. If *NHL '97* had one problem, it was the atmosphere - or rather, lack of one. Give or take the occasional organ noodle, it often felt as if you were playing in a vacuum but with *NHL '98*, the developers have truly gone to town. Employing two Stateside TV pundits to provide that idiosyncratic commentary we know and loathe, their cheesy anecdotes might be a tad over the top for the more discerning British palate but then they do know what they're shouting about. During breaks of play, you're bombarded with snippets of info about the players or the teams, none of which affects the game but does add both authority and authenticity. EA have also added music and crowd noise

Those sports fans who enjoy

the odd Barney will no doubt be

chuffed to learn that fighting

has returned for *NHL '98*.

finish. Game options, graphics or just good, old fashioned gore, everything's now just that teeny bit better on this latest version. Obviously, the most visual improvement has been with the graphics. While *NHL '97* was one of the best-looking sports sims around, EA have somehow managed to glean even more power out of the PlayStation for this sequel. Whether it's the vast play arenas or just the cool transparencies for the face shields, everything looks the part with the players themselves simply breathtaking. Each character is now



1 Possibly the only ice you'll find in California. **2** Constantly updated stats embellish your gameplay. **3** The NHL Eastern Conference.



■ PUBLISHER:	Electronic Arts	■ DEVELOPER:	EA Sports
■ RELEASE DATE:	Out now	■ ORIGIN:	Canada
■ PRICE:	£44.99	■ STYLE:	Ice hockey sim

(1) And that could just be the start of a fight... (2) Overhead angles enable you to zoom in on the action. (3) Want detail? Just look at those ads on the ice... (4) Little over seven minutes on the clock and the mood is tense.



for *NHL '98* and it works a treat. Now whenever there's a lull in the action, the music kicks in with the crowd often singing along or clapping in time. It's possibly the best soundtrack to a game we've ever heard. Now if only they could have licensed Blur or Republica (bizarrely, the current musical flavours of the month in ice hockey), it would've been just perfect.

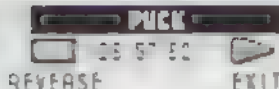
With *NHL '98*'s graphics and sound boosted to maximum, all that's required now is some decent gameplay. Guess what? *NHL '98* has this by the bucketload. To perfectly simulate ice hockey, the one thing you simply must get right is the turn-of-a-dime speed of the game and thankfully, *NHL '98* replicates this perfectly. Play it on the slower Rookie level and you'll get a half-decent idea of the speed, but take the plunge and attempt the Pro level and you'll be amazed how frenetic the action can get. For most sports sims, such high game speed usually equates to a sacrifice in control or accuracy but somehow, *NHL '98* keeps it

together. In contrast to the bewildering array of shots found in most soccer sims, *NHL '98* limits you to a few easily performed moves. For the first few games, *NHL '98*'s new system seems somewhat clumsy but stick with it and you'll soon be collecting rebounds and pulling off snap shots like the great Gretsky himself.

Speaking of a player known to enjoy the odd barney, grapple fans will be chuffed to see fighting has returned for *NHL '98*. Banned from the '97 version, the NHL have relented this year and allowed EA to include the fighting option. Provoke another player into a scrap and the camera swiftly zooms into a *Tekken* viewpoint, two energy bars popping up as you slug it out for the dubious honour of receiving the five minute penalty first. The game is crammed with neat little touches like this, none better than the players' behaviour in the sin bin. Some thrash about, belting at the ref, others just sit there, head in hands and sulking like six year olds while some players even abuse the officials as he's giving them their marching orders. Now if EA could just combine this with the fighting option...

Off the ice, there are more options than you could ever wish for. Change the rules or once you're bored of the one-off exhibition games, give the play-offs a try and battle teams for the Stanley Cup. If somehow this isn't authentic enough for you, try the full '82 game season and we'll guarantee it'll keep you fixated until sometime next century...

All in all, *NHL '98* is by far the best ice hockey game ever to grace the PlayStation. It's fast, looks absolutely stunning and whether you're 3-0 up against New York Rangers or just scrapping with a goalie, it's fun. However one question remains. Just how are they going to top this with *NHL '99*..?



(1) And even *Grandstand* doesn't get this close in. (2) Navigate the Menu screens to coordinate your rise to the top. (3) And that is what is officially known in ice hockey circles as a scrap...

VERDICT

■ GRAPHICS:	Crisp and credible 9	■ GAMEPLAY:	It just gets better 8
■ SOUND:	The best commentary ever 9	■ PRESENTATION:	Classic EA fare 8
■ VALUE:	Loads of options 8	■ ORIGINALITY:	Are you kidding? 4

NHL '98 combines fantastic graphics, gameplay and sound to make it one of the best sports games on the PlayStation. No home should be without it.

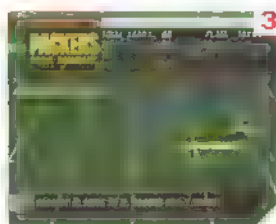
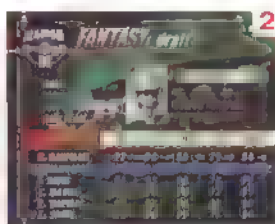
9
out of 10



PUBLISHER:	Electronic Arts	DEVELOPER:	EA Sports
RELEASE DATE:	Out now	ORIGIN:	Canada
PRICE	£44.99	STYLE:	American Football sim

Madden '98

It's taken a **long time coming** but the PlayStation has finally got the American Football game it deserves. Ladies and gentlemen, welcome to **Madden '98**



[1, 2] In keeping with every other American game, *Madden* is jam-packed with statistics. [3] And each time you score, the game runs through a summary of your drive, throwing up even more statistics. [4] The game comes complete with myriad viewing angles - this one isn't as practical as it looks. [5] Ah, the spectator's choice. By far the most effective view yet.

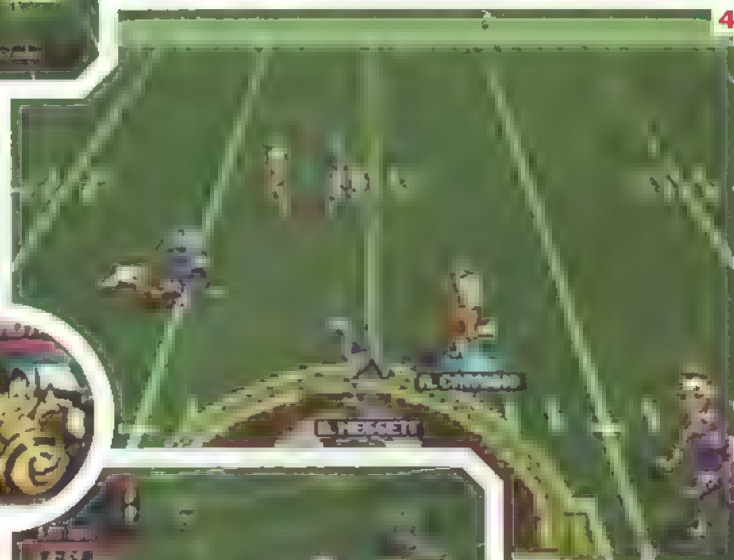


If, like us, you look at the score before reading the review, you're probably trying to figure out why such aropy-looking game has been given eight out of ten. Well, the answer's simple - gameplay. It's a rare thing nowadays to get a game which sacrifices graphical prowess for gameplay. More often than not it's the other way round, so it's a ways a pleasure to come across a title like *Madden '98* where gameplay rules supreme.

The game has been designed to be as accessible as possible - each of the option screens has a help page explaining exactly what each button does, for instance. But by far the cleverest part of *Madden '98* is the control system. Without due thought, it could have been overly complicated but the developers have wisely stuck to four simple moves for each part of the gameplay - quarterback control, running, defending and receiving - making it very playable indeed.

While we're on the subject of playability, we ought to tell you about the AI system. **Rather than just have your opponents going through the motions, as in other games, the AI routines make sure that your opponents play the best game possible.** During our PlayTest we noticed our opponents were playing very well but it wasn't until the final quarter when, four points ahead of us, their quarterback started to waste time that we realised how clever the AI is. It helps the game's longevity enormously, making it almost as much fun to play against the computer as it is to challenge your mates.

If there are any gripes to be had with *Madden '98*, it's the presentation. As we mentioned earlier, the graphics serve only to let you see what's going on in the game. The coders have tried to make them a bit special, using a strange mix of polygon and sprite, but it doesn't change the fact that they're dull. Soundwise the game is nothing special, either, the only noise coming from the stands being a derisory 'Defence' chant. And the commentary's barely worth a mention - it's that dreary But somehow you find yourself slowly being drawn



into the game until even the most fervent anti-US football fan is gagging for another go. Okay, so it might look a bit uninspiring but underneath the ugly cover lies an incredibly playable game. Recent incarnations of *Madden* have sacrificed playability at the expense of improving the graphics, but fortunately EA have come to the senses and with *Madden '98* we've got the closest thing to the wonderful 3DO version yet.

Alternatively...

<i>Madden '88</i>	8.10	PSX26
<i>Madden '87</i>	8.10	PSX26
<i>NFL Quarterback Club</i>	6.10	PSX26
<i>NFL Gamemate</i>	7.10	PSX26

VERDICT

GRAPHICS:	Practical 8	GAMEPLAY:	Smoothly executed 9
SOUND:	Nothing to shout about 8	PRESENTATION:	Options galore 8
LIFESPAN:	How long have you got? 8	ORIGINALITY:	We'll ignore this bit 4

Don't let the graphics put you off - this is the best American Football game you're likely to find on the PlayStation... until *Madden '99*, that is.



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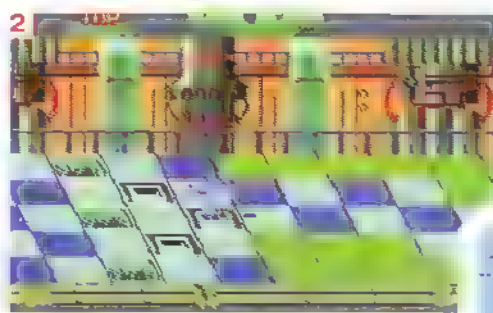
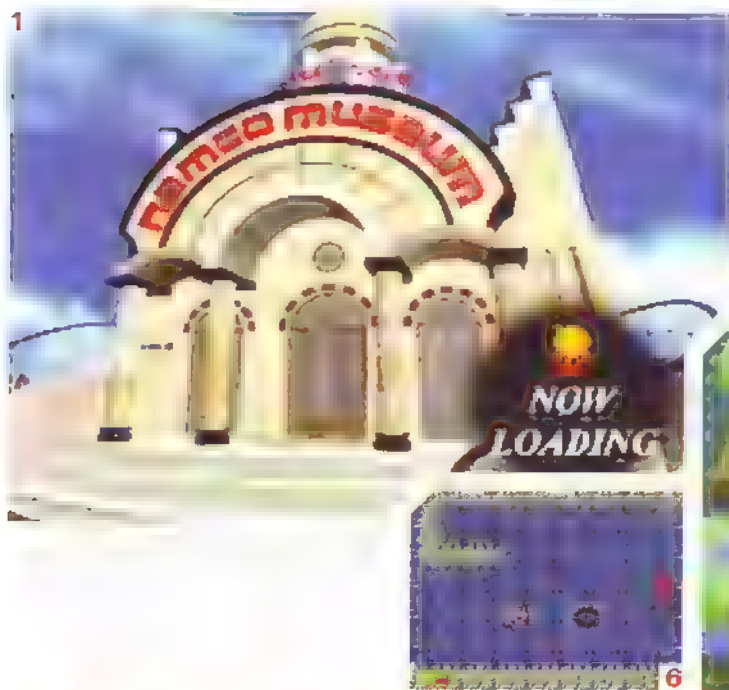
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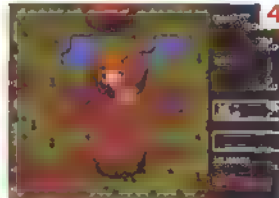
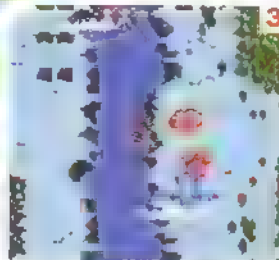
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(1) The sparkling museum. Exhibits include (2) an authentic old-style crap game, (3) a worthy vertical scrolling shoot 'em up, (4) a game that's worth playing, (5) Pacmania and (6) Baraduke.



Namco Museum Volume 5

You are feeling sleepy, you are **regressing back to a previous life,**
a time when **ten pence** was worth something and **Frogger**
was **state-of-the-art digital entertainment...**

Nostalgia... is it really a thing of the past? Apparently not, as Namco relentlessly continue to churn out their 'Now that's what I used to call gaming' CDs, the *Namco Museum* series essentially 100 per cent faithful emulations of arcade machines of yesteryear.

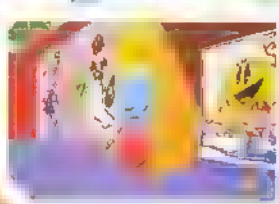
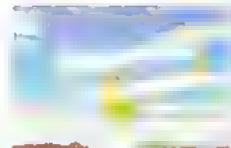
As with previous *Museum* volumes, much time and effort has been employed on producing an allegedly amusing intro sequence, featuring the polygonal interpretations of characters from the various games. You can safely skip this without fear of missing any entertainment – the only item of note is that Pac-Man seems to have developed eyebrows, no doubt to enhance his acting ability.

A lot of effort has also been expended in the largely pointless task of creating a three-dimensional world where you can wander through corridors and up and down stairs, trying to find the doorway to the game of your choice. Once. Before you use the short-cut buttons instead. But for the serious arcade trivia fiend there's plenty of information on the original machine usually including pictures of the PCB, original artwork from the cabinet, and in some cases a complete storyboard (in Japanese, natch) of the game.

The five games contained on the disc are exactly as you remember them – that's because they are more or less 100 per cent emulated, using images of the original game ROMs. You can even change the various

standard machine settings (lives, difficulty, etc) from the comfort of your joystick. Obviously, you can also add extra credits at the touch of a button, which takes some of the challenge away.

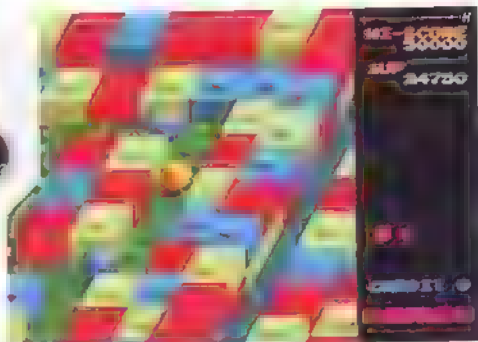
As time goes on, Namco seem to be finding it more and more difficult to find games that people might want to remember. In many ways, this disc does nostalgia a disservice. If the contents of this CD was all you had to go on, you'd be tempted to conclude that all the games of yesteryear were a bit crap – apart from the dubious appeal of *Pacmania*, the only game on this disc which has anything to offer is *Legend Of The Valkyrie*, which makes the asking price seem a bit steep.



After the game's pointless rendered intro, you can traverse the pointless rendered interior of the museum.

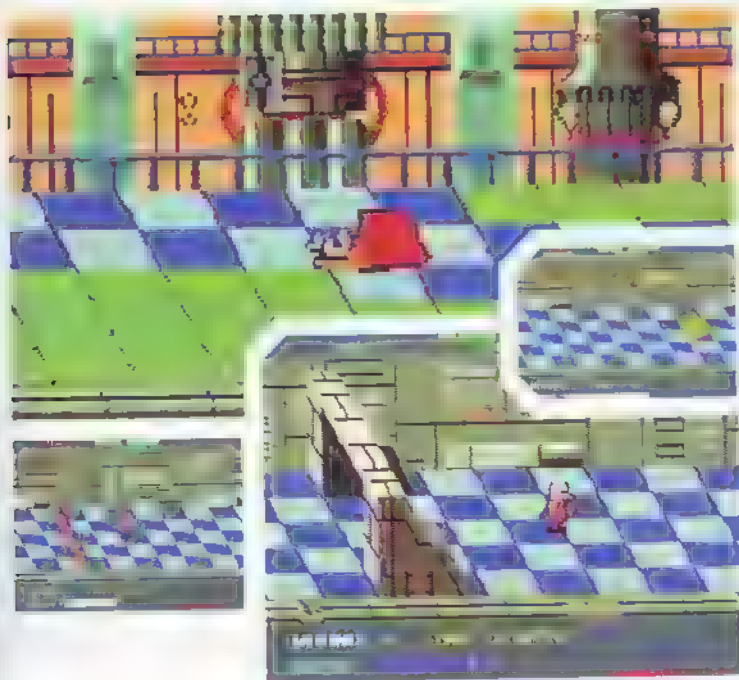


■ PUBLISHER:	SCEE	■ DEVELOPER:	In-house
■ RELEASE DATE:	November	■ ORIGIN:	Japan
■ PRICE:	£34.99	■ STYLE:	Classic coin-op compilation



Pacmania

Hmm. There never seemed to be much point to this game in the arcade. Essentially, it's the same as classic *Pac-Man*, except with a 3D style isometric perspective and jazzed-up graphics. Oh, and Pac-Man can jump. And there's a super evil ghost (the one with the evil eyebrows). As *Pac-Man* goes, this is an okay version. But surely you've outgrown *Pac-Man* by now?

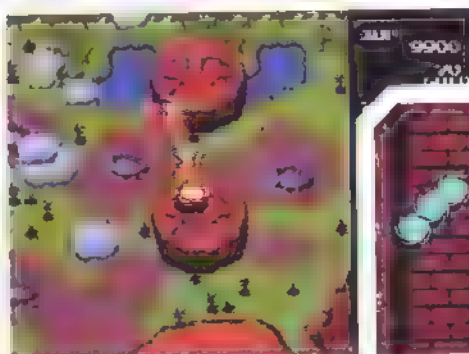


Metro Racer

Some people may sigh fondly when you mention this game. They may go on about revolutionary gameplay, the thrill and excitement of jumping on and off skateboards and over coke cans in a race against the clock. These people are not your friends, and they're lying. Admittedly, the arcade version was mildly popular for a few minutes, one wet Sunday in the early '80s, but now it can only be recommended as a source of fun if you can't find a wall to beat your head against.

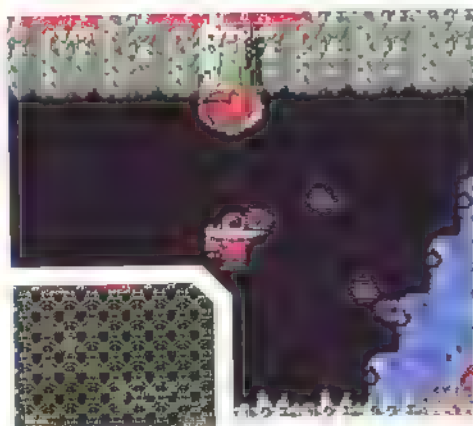
Dragon Spirit

Take 1942, substitute dragons for planes, fireballs for bullets, all manner of nasty flying things for Japs and there, in essence, you have *Dragon Spirit*. It is a slightly-more-than-mediocre vertically scrolling shoot 'em up, with the occasional power-ups and big baddies you would expect. A fairly tough game, with no automatic continue.



Legend Of The Valkyrie

The only game of any real merit in this sort of early *Zelda*/*Saunter*/*Commando* effort, which actually looks very nice (for an Eighties arcade game), and plays well too. This would certainly be the one with some value as a game rather than a curio, but the fact that you have an infinite number of credits available means you can probably play through it in an hour or so.



Baraduke

There's always a completely pointless game in these retro collections, isn't there? *Baraduke* is a strange and ultimately dull title, in which the player attempts to guide his or her aquanaut through various caverns full of nasty things, which obviously shoot, blow and generally harass the aforesaid. Terrible. This was the arcade unit that you'd find tucked in the corner, behind the kiddies' police cars and fluffy toy grabber machines.



MAME

If you are really interested in the nostalgia of old arcade machines and you also own a computer such as a PC, Amiga or Mac, you may be interested to know about the Multiple Arcade Machine Emulator. Essentially, it's an emulator which can run many of the old classics such as *Donkey Kong*, *Zaxxon*, *Moon Cresta*, *Pac-Man*, *Green Beret* etc. And it's shareware. Details can be found on the Internet at: <http://www.xs4all.nl/~delite/index.html>

VERDICT

■ GRAPHICS:	You jest, surely? 2	■ GAMEPLAY	Tougher than you think 5
■ SOUND:	Recaptured faithfully 3	■ PRESENTATION:	Polished 8
■ LIFESPAN	Only as a talking point 2	■ ORIGINALITY:	In their day 5

Weaker than previous volumes only *Legend Of The Valkyrie* and *Pacmania* are worth the asking price - but plenty of background detail for the arcade obsessive.

4
out of 10

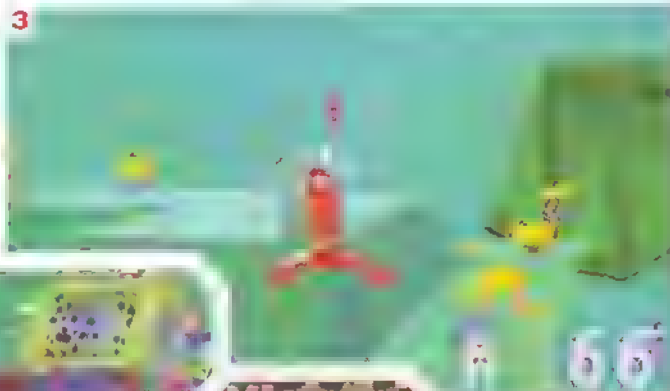
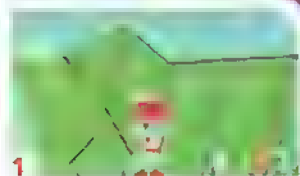


PUBLISHER:	Telstar	DEVELOPER:	Accolade
RELEASE DATE:	Out now	ORIGIN:	UK
PRICE:	£44.99	STYLE:	3D platform game

Bubsy 3D

Bubsy the bobcat used to be a **bit of a star** on the 16-bit consoles – now he's on the comeback trail on the PlayStation. But surely the days of the **cute platform characters** are numbered? We find out whether it's **still cool for cats...**

(1) Funky helmet attire optional. Where are you going, Bubsy? (2) Games designers in 'amusing level name' shocker. (3) The cat swims. Cool. (4) It all adds up, now.



Bubsy 3D isn't unlike Nintendo's *Super Mario*, in the sense that you can move freely round a virtual world, with the 'camera' following close behind you. And, as in *Mario*, it's possible to move the view around 360° so you can have a good look at where you are and decide what you should do next. But there the comparisons must end, for the two games are, of course, a class apart.

In *Bubsy 3D* you must find a way through 16 sizeable levels of the hellish 'Forbidden Planet' and collect enough rockets to be able to travel back to Earth. There are various enemies to be avoided, if possible, chief among these being the woolies – strange aliens that spit at you, seriously damaging your health. Acid baths and electric fences are so figure highly on the list of possible dangers that can catch out the unwary.

The kind of things you should be doing to help yourself survive on this planet include collecting atoms which you can use to shoot the woolies, looking through the various telescopes available to check the lie of the

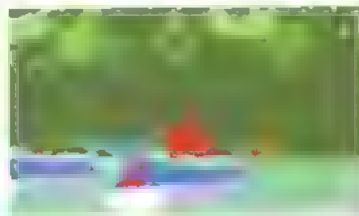
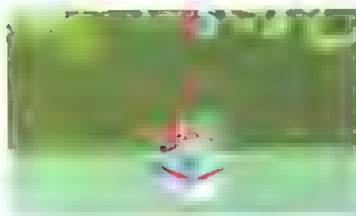
land and, most importantly of all, hopping across as many tricky platforms as you can – the key to success in this hideously garish and mind-boggling y d l game.

Bubsy's environment, despite being genuinely large and having a 'spacey' feel about it, is made up of crude and gaudily-coloured shapes. Besides looking utterly crap, just half an hour of staring around the bloody place is enough to hurt your brain. And there's no joy in finding your way through the levels – only the hope of finding somewhere less painful to look at. True, there's the two-player mode to try out, which gives you the chance to shoot at your opponent, but unfortunately this turns out to be merely an unspectacular let down. And besides, it's too difficult to find a willing victim to play it with, anyway.

The idea has been mooted, in some quarters, that maybe this is a game we could fob off as 'one for the kids'. But to say that *Bubsy* looks like it's been designed and programmed by kids would perhaps be more accurate...

Alternatively...

<i>Outworld</i>	8/10	PSM2A
<i>Crash Bandicoot</i>	8/10	PSM1B
<i>Paradise</i>	8/10	PSM1A
<i>Crisis</i>	7/10	PSM2S
<i>Bubsy 3D</i>	3/10	PSM2B



The wee bobcat is not only limited to using Shanks' pony, he's an all-action, swimming, powerboating hipster. But he's just in a bad adventure.

VERDICT

GRAPHICS:

Simply awful 2

GAMEPLAY:

Excruciating 3

SOUND:

Unremarkable 5

PRESENTATION:

Perfectly all right 7

LIFESPAN

Big, but so what? 1

ORIGINALITY:

Rare in its awfulness 6

A dreadful game on a grand scale. One is simply underwhelmed! Obviously the developers who designed its 'hell planet' environment got a bit carried away.

3 out of 10

Official UK PlayStation Magazine 26

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Pratimam

this month, at the games that shaped the PlayStation upon its launch, and have subsequently been released on the cut-price Platinum Range. Virtually every gaming platform has been supported by budget software. Essentially a 're-release' gives a title a longer life and encourages new gamers to sift through a console's back catalogue. SCE's decision to release the Platinum Range was not borne out of an intense desire for further profits. It was more a case of the company dipping a toe into budget waters to see what the outcome would be. And the success of the range has surprised everyone.

So, let us guide you through the first batch of games released at £19.99 (veteran PS gamers need not apply) in the first of our Platinum Range round-ups...

[1] **Imposed** is one of the games that made the PlayStation, installed in state such as the Ministry of Sound, remains one of SCE's benchmark titles.

[2] **Woahny**, even after five years, the game still has two parts.



Wipeout

■ PUBLISHED:	Payson
■ FIRST RELEASED:	Sep 1995
■ PRICE:	£19.99



Then in level six, the course begins to dip down. It's not in Greenland and it's full of obstacles, ditches, trees and sharp turns.



Ridge Racer

PUBLISHER: SCEE

DATE RELEASED: Sep 1995

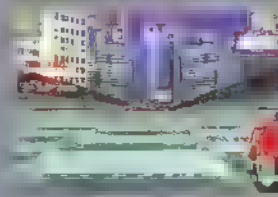
PRICE: £19.99

In these heady days, it's sometimes difficult to believe the impact that Ridge Racer had on videogaming. In the dark days of yore, it was almost impossible to believe that Namco's splendid rain-op could translate to home console with the minimum of fuss. But Ridge Racer did it: was the first ever game released in Japan for the

PlayStation, but, even two years down the line, its spirit remains undimmed. As one of our correspondents so eloquently stated in the recent racing game feature (PSM21), 'the role of the driving games throughout its relatively short life has been that of proclamation and spreading the word'. Certainly, Ridge Racer announced the PlayStation's arrival to an expectant world, a world of 16 bit games.

And hey, to people, Ridge Racer is great. We know it's only got one track, but what are you going to do about it, eh? EH? Powersliding Ridge cars around corners remains one of the PlayStation's greatest crimes. Although you can finish the game after a few days of racing, because the mechanics of the thing are so spot-on, you always find yourself returning for another spin. And it's equally as good as Ridge Racer, better even than Ridge Racer Revolution, so there.

VERDICT 9/10



11 Every videogames player should learn the art of powersliding the car in Ridge Racer, or break up the track and throw the back end out. 12 Ridge Racer opponents to jump them out of the way. 13 Only one more is good.



Readers, Ridge Racer is the name of the game and if you don't have a copy then something is amiss. Get it.



12 Although Tekken isn't a full-on 3D extravaganza, it's still the best. 13 And Marshall Law is the best. 14 Total.

Tekken

PUBLISHER: SCEE

DATE RELEASED: Nov 1995

PRICE: £19.99

If the truth be known, although Tekken introduced a few rather splendid characters, it isn't massively different from the fellow we're here to chat about. Tekken was the polygonal pugilist that had gamers champing at the bit. Although the usually impressive battle arena Toshinden was first to the PlayStation, because we'd played the Japanese version of the game, we already knew Tekken was the top dog. And it hasn't really aged in the two years since it's been with us. Marshall Law is still the guy, Yoshimitsu still looks like a renegade (renegade wizard, Oz and Kazuya still win).

Namco got it right first time. The animation is sensational, the manoeuvres slick and although some of the moves are incred- bly

complex involving some 12 buttons and more, you can learn to play the game in minutes. And there are a couple of easily accessible special moves where you can snap someone's neck at the push of two buttons. Awfully nice, how what we're trying today is that if you are a Tekken fan, this gap in your life. A victory for common sense, andaves though Tekken 2 has a few more characters, really, it's not that much better than the original.

VERDICT 9/10



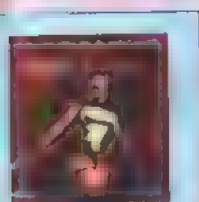
11 Tekken features a uniquely Ratty centered intro sequence. Here's Nina in her purple jump suit. 12 Kazuya is really mad for it, so if you're asking...

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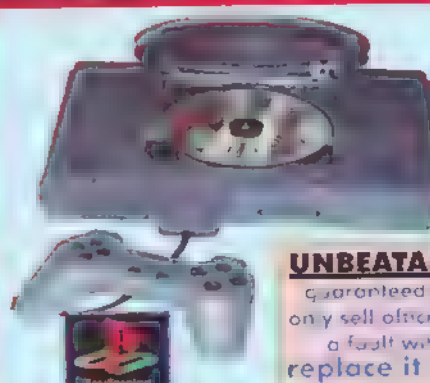


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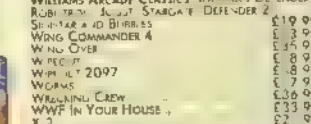
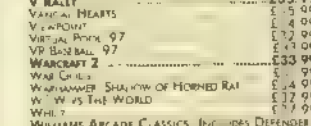
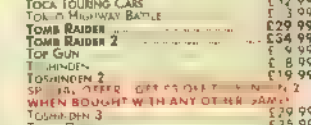
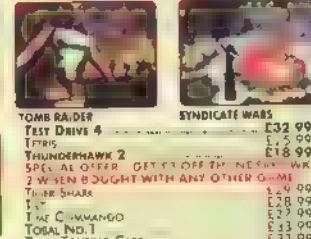
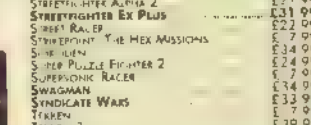
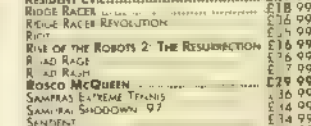
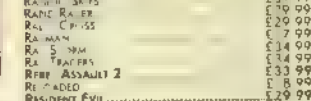
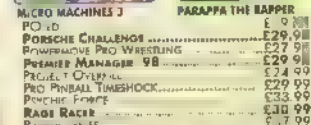
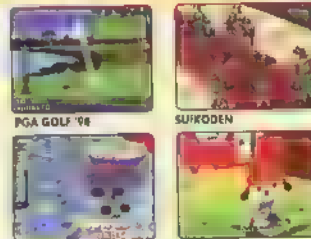
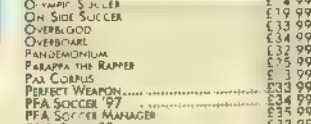
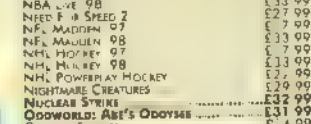
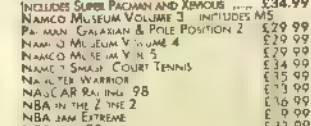
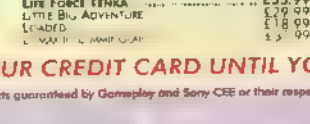
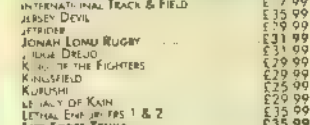
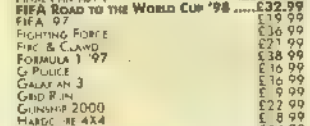
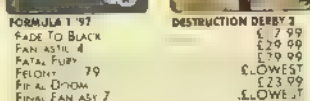
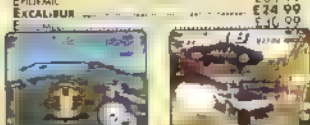
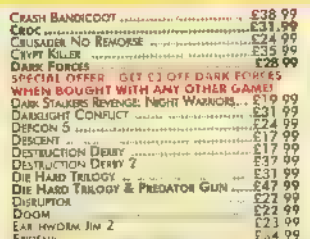
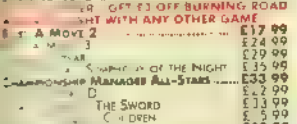
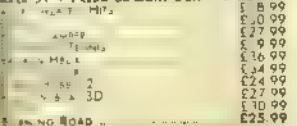
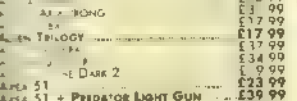
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TOP SECRET

EA's in-depth combat strategy game *Warcraft 2* is the focus of this month's tips section, which also includes *The Lost World*, *Need For Speed 2*, and *Spider-Man*.

WARCRAFT 2: THE DARK SAGA



BUILDING A BASE

Using a Peon/Peasant to repair a structure that's under construction will increase the construction speed.

Always keep a clear path between your Gold Mine and Great/Town Hall—any obstacles will discourage your Peons/Peasants, causing them to find a longer route, or stop altogether.

When constructing a Lumber Mill, always try to build it as close to your wood supply as possible. This way, your Peon/Peasant won't have as far to travel, thus speeding up the process.

Always leave enough space around Barracks to avoid trapping any units that you may need to produce.

Position your Cannon Towers carefully. If they're too close to your base, they can damage your structures and units if your base has been penetrated by enemy troops.



DEFENDING A BASE



Use Farms as a defensive line to protect your base from enemy attacks. They have more hit points than a Wall or Tower and are not considered primary

an alternative route.

Place Guard Towers and Axethrowers/Archers behind your defensive line of Farms for added security. They can attack any enemies that try to make a path through your line of Farms.

Use natural barriers (streams, rocks and woods) to protect your base where possible. Forcing the attacking enemy into a bottleneck will allow you to hold them back with Grunts/Footmen while attacking with Towers and long-range weapons.

If a line of trees protects your base, try not to destroy them while collecting wood. Remember to keep a constant check on your Peons/Peasants, as they will move on to new wooded areas once an existing one has been exhausted.

Use Peon/Peasants to repair your Towers from behind while being attacked from the front. It'll increase their lifespan.

ATTACKING A BASE

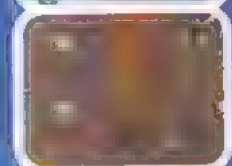
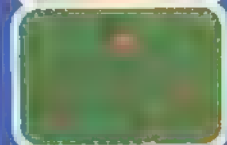
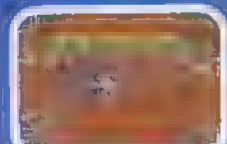


A path through forest or rock areas is ideal for a surprise attack.

Building Towers around your enemy's Gold Mine to attack approaching Peons/Peasants will eventually cripple their gold resources.

Use Catapults/Ballistas to destroy enemy Towers, as they have a slightly longer range.

An upgraded Tower within an enemy base will open fire on anything within range once erected. Send Sappers/Demolition Squads



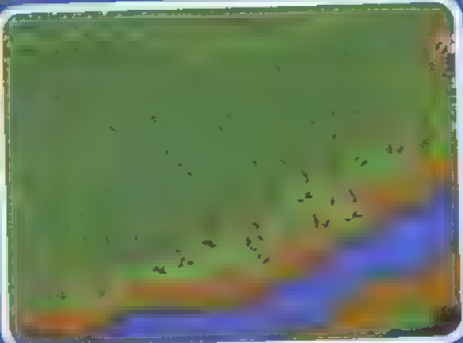


into the centre of a group of enemy units to inflict maximum damage on enemy structures, if positioned correctly.

Casting Haste/Slow on your Sappers/Demolition Squads will allow them to penetrate enemy defences quicker.

When attacking a group of enemy units or base, attack with as many units as possible. This is true in any battle.

GENERAL TIPS



While learning to control your units, turn the game speed down to 1/2 or 1/4.

Peons/Peasants make ideal scouts. If confronted, they can be sacrificed to reveal the resources. Once construction begins, your Peon/Peasant will become as strong as the structure, giving limited protection.

Peons/Peasants are more effective, though you must use the unit's Unload command in order for it to stay invisible while unloading troops.

When confronted by a group of units, use the Flame Shield on the centre unit to cause maximum damage to the surrounding units.

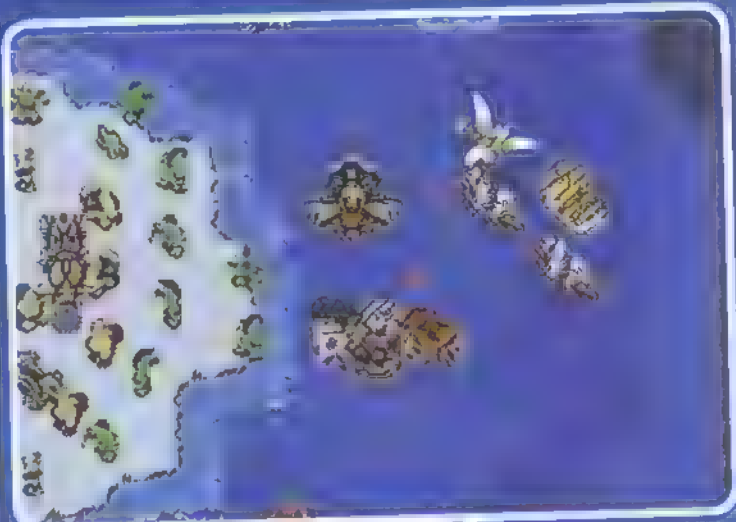
Using invisibility and Flame Shield on a Destroyer can be very effective against enemy vessels, as they cannot be hit and can use the Flame Shield to cause damage.

Cast Exorcism to damage both Skeletons and Death Knights.

Casting Unholy Armour, then Death and Decay on a Death Knight will create a powerful unit capable of withstanding and destroying many enemy units that get in its way.

Casting Runes outside your enemy's mine will greatly reduce their gold income.

Avoid detonating Sappers/Demolition Squads next to any of your units and structures as they can cause damage and loss of life.



Units can be used to damage each other.

Units can be used to damage each other.

Units can be used to damage each other.

Units can be used to damage each other.

During hand-to-hand combat, concentrate on attacking single units at a time to get the most effective result.

Units can be used to damage each other.

Units can be used to damage each other.

Units can be used to damage each other.

Tankers/Destroyers can be used to lure enemy units within range of your Juggernauts/Battleships.



Quick troops can be used to lure enemy units within range of your Guard/Cannon Towers.

A group of six upgraded Berserkers/Rangers will have enough firepower to swiftly remove any enemy air units.



Cheats

SPELLS



Ogre-Mage

Eye Of Kilrogg = 70 spell points: Allows you to see enemy bases on the map.

Bloodlust = 50 spell points: Use this spell on your own units just before attacking = it'll send them berserk.

Runes = 200 spell points: A dangerous trap that'll cause massive damage when triggered.

Death Knight

Death Coil = 100 spell points: Cast this on an enemy to transfer their energy to the caster.

Haste = 50 spell points: This will increase the speed of any unit that it's cast upon.

Raise Dead = 150 spell points: Restores life to newly dead units.

Whirlwind = 100 spell points: Creates very powerful tornadoes that destroy anything directly in it's path.

Unholy Armour = 100 spell points: Allows temporary invincibility.

Death & Decay = 25 spell points: Creates a dark cloud that'll rot and decompose anything it finds.

Paladin

Holy Vision = 70 spell points: Allows you to view the entire map for a limited time.

Healing = 60 spell points: Restores hit points to any damaged unit.

Exorcism = 4 spell points: This spell will inflict damage to undead enemies.

Wage

Fireball = 100 spell points: Creates an instant fireball, ideal for scorching enemies.

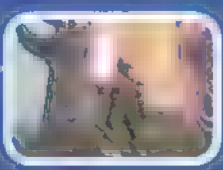
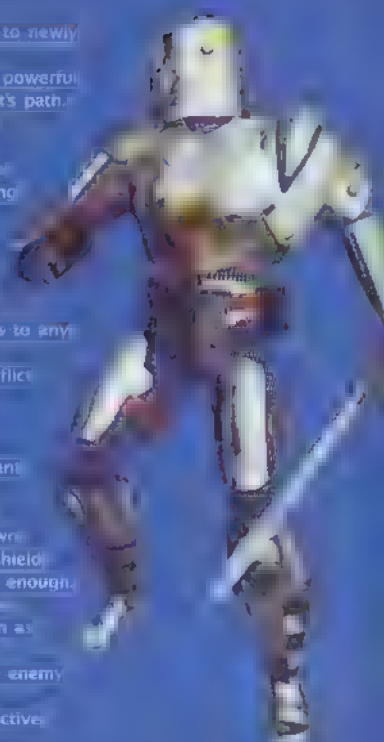
Slow = 50 spell points: Using this spell on enemies will slow them and their attack down.

Flame Shield = 80 spell points: Creates a shield of fire that'll damage any enemy units close enough.

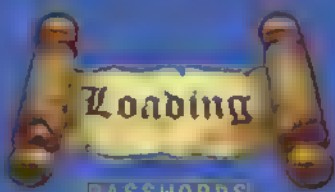
Invisibility = 100 spell points: Makes your units invisible to the enemy but wears off as soon as you attack.

Polymorph = 200 spell points: Cast this on enemy units to render them useless.

Blizzard = 25 spell points: Creates a destructive storm that can cover large areas.



The Human Alliance



PASSWORDS



The Orc Horde

Tides Of Darkness

1 Hillsbrad

2 Southshore

3 Tol Barad

4 Zul'Dare

5 Southshore

6 Tol Barad

7 Zul'Dare

8 Southshore

9 Tol Barad

10 Zul'Dare

11 Southshore

12 Tol Barad

13 Zul'Dare

14 Southshore

15 Tol Barad

16 Zul'Dare

17 Southshore

18 Tol Barad

19 Zul'Dare

20 Southshore

HLLBRD

MSHTM

HSHTSH

TCKN2

HTLBRD

DNLCG

GRMETI

TYRHND

STTETO

PSNKS

STRVLN

STTETO

BSITNA

GRTPR

10 Zul'Dare

11 Southshore

12 Tol Barad

13 Zul'Dare

14 Southshore

15 Tol Barad

16 Zul'Dare

17 Southshore

18 Tol Barad

19 Zul'Dare

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21 Tol Barad

22 Zul'Dare

23 Southshore

24 Tol Barad

25 Zul'Dare

26 Southshore

27 Tol Barad

28 Zul'Dare

29 Southshore

30 Tol Barad

ZLDR

MSHTM

RCSTHS

SLTNN

RCCLBR

BDLND

FLPST

RNSINT

RZNGF

DSYRC

ODRSSQ

EMEPSI

SCFOLI

FOUPLI

Beyond The Dark Portal

1 Hillsbrad

2 Southshore

3 Tol Barad

4 Zul'Dare

5 Southshore

6 Tol Barad

7 Zul'Dare

8 Southshore

9 Tol Barad

10 Zul'Dare

11 Southshore

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BATTLE ARENA TOSHINDEN



Play as Gaia

On the title screen, press: Down, Down/Left, Left and Square just as the options are sliding across the screen. If done correctly, you will hear the announcer say 'fight'. Once on the Character Select screen, highlight Eiji, then press Up and any attack button; you'll now play as Gaia.

Play as Sho

Enter the same code to play as Gaia, then wait for the demo to start. Now press Start on controller two to return to the title screen, but this time enter the following sequence: Left, Right, Left, Right, Left and Square. If done correctly, you will hear the announcer say 'fight'. Once on the Character Select screen, highlight Kayin, then press Down and Square; you'll now play as Sho.

HEXEN

Cheat Mode

Enter the Options screen from the Main menu and select Pad Config. Press and hold R2 then press: Right, Down, Right, Triangle and X on the pad configuration screen; you'll hear a sound if entered correctly. After starting a game, pause it, and you'll see a Cheat option available. This will allow you to access God mode, all weapons and keys, as well as other options.

THE LOST WORLD



Cheat mode

Enter the following passwords to activate the corresponding

some of these codes will disable the sound effects.



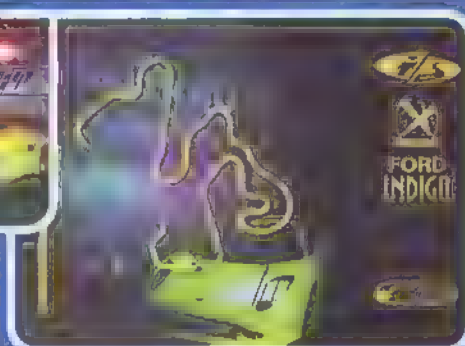
Effect	Password
Human Prey	Square, X, Circle, Triangle, X, Circle, Square, Triangle, Square, X, Circle, X.
Human Prey	Triangle, X, Triangle, X, Circle, X, Square, Triangle, Triangle, Square, Circle, X.
Velociraptor	Square, X, Circle, Triangle, X, Circle, Square, Triangle, X, Square, Circle, X.
Tyrannosaurus Rex	Triangle, Square, Circle, Square, X, Triangle, Triangle, Circle, Square, Triangle, Triangle, X.
Display Comp	X, Triangle, Triangle, Square, X, Circle, Triangle, Square, Triangle, Circle, X, Circle.
Display Hunter	Triangle, X, Square, Triangle, Circle, X, Square, Circle, Triangle, Square, X, X.
Display Human Prey Gallery	Triangle, Square, Circle, Square, X, Triangle, Triangle, Circle, X, Square, Triangle, Triangle.
Display Velociraptor	Circle, Square, Triangle, X, Circle, Triangle, Square, X, Circle, Square, X, Triangle.
Display Tyrannosaurus Rex Gallery	Triangle, Triangle, Circle, Square, Triangle, X, Triangle, Square, Square, X, Triangle, Circle.

Level passwords

Enter one of the following passwords to select the required level.

Level	Password
Human	Circle, Circle, X, X, Triangle, Square, Square, Square, Circle, Circle, Square, Triangle.
Raptor	Circle, Circle, X, X, Triangle, Square, Triangle, Square, Triangle, Circle, Triangle, X.
T-Rex	Square, Square, Triangle, Triangle, X, Triangle, Triangle, Circle, Circle, Square, X, Triangle.
Prey	Triangle, Triangle, Square, Square, Circle, Square, Triangle, X, Square, Triangle, Circle, Square.

NEED FOR SPEED 2



Drive Ford Indigo

To drive the Ford Indigo, simply enter I&ZIP as your password. The Ford Indigo is also available after winning Tournament mode.

Monolithic Studios Track

Enter your password as SHOTME to access the Monolithic Studios track. It'll take you through various film studio sets.

Super Engine

Enter your password as POWRUP. This will upgrade all cars with Pioneer engines, which will give better acceleration and top speed.

Different Camera Angles

While a track is loading, press and hold R1, R2, L1, L2, Square, Triangle, Circle and X simultaneously, until the race begins. You'll now have 9 different camera angles to choose from instead of four.

Race Map

While racing, press and hold Triangle to toggle the display on and off as well as bring up a map of your position.

Tournament Passwords

Track	Password
Proving Grounds	LDKMTD
Outback	GROWPG
Northern Country	HTYSAG
Mediterranean	WGVLCQ
Mystic Peaks	BRQOOR

Hidden Vehicles

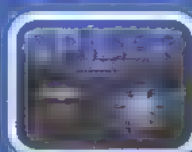
Enter the following passwords to access the hidden Vehicles:

Vehicle	Player 1	Player 2
Mercedes Benz	BNZME	BNZU
Saab	BEETME	BEEU
BMW	BMRME	BMRU
Mazda	MAZME	MAZU
Citroen 2CV	CITME	CITU
VW Beetle	BUGME	BUGU
Audi Quattro	QUATME	QUATU
Jeep	YJME	YJU
Volvo	VOVME	VOVU
Hummer	LIMOME	LIMOU
Land Cruiser	LCME	LCU
Jeep 2	JEPME	JEPU
Van	VANME	VANU
Army Truck	ARMYME	ARMYU
Snow Plough	SNOWME	SNOWU
School Bus	BUSME	BUSU

Tram
Semi tractor
Wagon
Tyrannosaurus Rex
Vendor Stand 1
Vendor Stand 2
Vendor Stand 3
Crate
Log
Outhouse

TRAMME
SEMIME
WAGOME
TREMME
STDAME
STDBME
STDCME
CRATME
LOGME
OUTHME
TRAMU
SEMUI
WAGOU
TREXU
STDAU
STDBU
STDCU
CRATU
LOGU
OUTHU

SPIDER



Recharge Weapons and Energy

While playing, pause the game then press Triangle, X (3 times), Circle, X, Square, Triangle, X, Triangle, Circle.

Shrink Spider

To shrink the spider, press Triangle, Square, Circle, Triangle. The spider will now shrink to almost nothing.

PASSWORDS

Location	Password
Laboratory	
Lab floor	1EMLC939GPR8F3BE7KT1
Sinks	CHMLC939GPR8F3LWGT53
Lab top	86MLC939GPR8F3VFQ354
Sevantes room	FW1MC939GPR8F3BF7KT1
Factory	
Conveyor belts	PMYMC939GPR8F336DTT53
Machine room	ASRMC939GPR8F3VTKKT1
Tubes	WDRQC939GPR8F3LM8595
Mechanical Arm Boss	8WV5L939GPR8F36DTT53
	8WV5L939GPR8F3G1QJ84
City	
Down the street	9WV5L939GPR8F3LRT654
Side of building	6SXXS939GPR8F3LRT654
Park	W9PNT639GPR8F3B9LV53
Under the street	N7KB3Y19GPR8F3V95HR5
Along the street	N7KB3Y19GPR8F3GGK4T3
Museum	
Display cases	P7KB3Y19GPR8F3BPFCC3
Volcano	G7KB3Y11GPR8F3BPFCC3
Dinosaur bones	H7KB3Y1QFPR8F3QXSD54
Model city	J7KB3Y1GWPR8F3I766D1
Temple	K7KB3Y1B15S8F3QXSD54
Museum boss	K7KB3Y1B15S8F3BTQBB4
Sewer	
Well	V7KB3Y1B15S8F3QS7QC7
Along the sewer	W7KB3Y1VRVP8F3LC1M95
Food cartton	X7KB3Y1VLN7BF31CH1C3
Up the well	Y7KB3Y1VVI6QF3QS7QC1
Ryan's world	Q7KB3Y1LORTQD3VKCDT1
Evil Lab	
Circuit boards	Q7KB3Y1LDRTOQD3LCQ583
Lab top	R7KB3Y118H56T1WTY4R4
Hard drives	S7KB3Y118H56T1TCQ5R3
Brian's folly	T7KB3Y118H56T1FNY4R4
On the ceiling	T7KB3Y118H56T1TC4LD1
Kips bonus	68KB3Y118H56T151P6C4
Brain boss	68KB3Y118H56T1TMVM31

If you have any queries about games and their release dates, these are the people to contact...

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London SW3 1,,

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01895 456700

BMG Interactive

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01332 297797

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01753 549442

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NatCap house, 46-48 Silver Street, Doncaster, DN1 1HT

01302 325225

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01372 745222

Virgin

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0171 368 2255

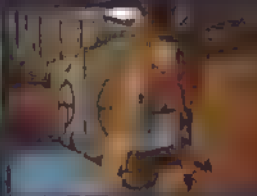


On the CD



Tomb Raider 2

Tomb Raider 2 is packed with goodies, new locations to explore, and smart new graphics.



PUSSY PAIR: Extended
STYLE: 3D arcade adventure
PROGRAM: Playable demo

It's definitely shaping up to be the best Christmas ever for PlayStation owners, with a flood of fantastic new games due to hit the shelves any day now. Psygnosis leapt into the fray with *FL 97*, the eagerly awaited sequel to the best-selling PlayStation game in the UK. This was followed by last month's excellent *G-Police*, and this month sees the quirky *Overboard!* and the visual delights of *Colony Wars*. *Final Fantasy VII*, the roleplaying epic from the master of the genre Square, will be out any day now (see this issue's full review on page 188, and the rolling demo on this very disc). And to top it all off, Lara Croft has returned in the sequel to one of the most critically acclaimed PlayStation games ever, *Tomb Raider*.

Tomb Raider 2 sees Lara off on yet another *Indiana Jones*-style adventure. This time she's searching for the lost Dagger of Xian, which once belonged to some Chinese geezer and is rumoured to have magical powers. Unfortunately, Lara isn't alone in her quest - a number of other powerful, mysterious, and generally unsavoury groups are also seeking the power they believe the ancient weapon will grant them.

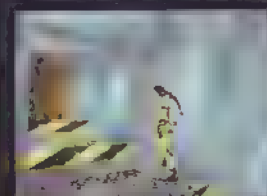
Our exclusive playable demo of the game features part of the first level, which takes place inside a secret tunnel complex hidden inside the Great Wall of China. As far as Lara's research can tell, it's here that the dagger should be found.

CONTROLS

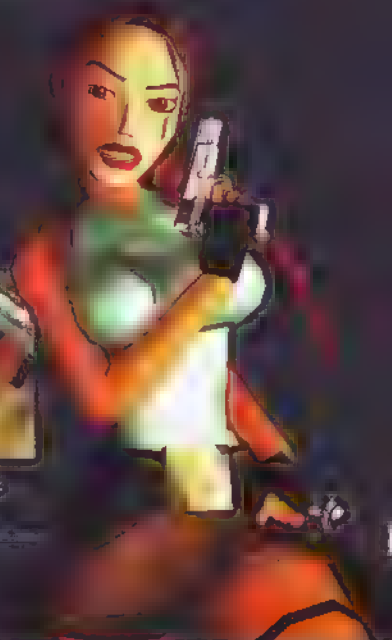
- ↑ Run forward
- ↓ Jump back
- ← Turn left
- Turn right
- [] Walk
- [] Look (move view with joystick)
- [] Load/throw flare
- [] Side-step (with joystick)
- [] Draw/holster weapon
- [] Roll
- [] Jump
- [] Action/fire weapon
- [] Go to inventory/menu screen

Additional features

This demo is just a small part of a truly enormous game - *Tomb Raider 2* dwarfs even its predecessor in scale. So, for the full run-down on the title, just turn to our exclusive eight-page review which begins on page 86.



Our exclusive demo features a section from the first level of the game, but there are many more...



So is *Tomb Raider 2* really

that good? How does *Colony*

Wars shape up? Has Namco

done it again with the sequel to

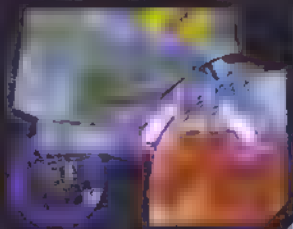
Air Combat? Is *Overboard!* as

much fun in two-player mode?

And what about *Broken Sword 2*?

Judge for yourselves with this

month's bumper CD...



Colony Wars is, without a doubt, one of the most stunning space combat games ever. Don't believe us? Just have a go at the playable mission on this month's cover disc.



Colony Wars

In the fun game you get to take on everything from small fighters to vast dreadnaughts.

■ **STYLE:** 3D space combat
■ **PROGRAM:** Playable demo

Colony Wars is set in the far future, at a time when humanity has spread to the stars, and is now ruled by a tyrannical Empire headed by the despotic Tsar. In a bid for freedom, several minor planets have banded together to form the League of Free Worlds, and have begun to rebel against the unjust rule of the Tsar and his Empire. As a newly trained League pilot, you play a pivotal role in the war, flying a variety of League fighter craft on a series of critical missions against the numerically superior Empire forces. Outnumbered and outgunned, the future looks bleak for the League, and every mission you undertake can affect the course of the whole conflict.

This demo features the very first mission in the game. After winning its first major battle against Empire forces, the League must consolidate its hold on its home system to create a strong base for further operations. As part of this effort, you've been assigned to protect a League space station that's believed to be the target of an Empire raid.

You begin the mission in your S-S

Vampire fighter, floating in space near the station. Don't take too long to admire the scenery, though, as the Empire is about to attack. The Heads-Up Display of your fighter will direct you to the nearest

enemy fighter, and once you've got close enough, you can open up. The Vampire is armed with several weapon systems, including an anti-shield laser, laser, and stun missiles. Use the anti-shield lasers to knock down the enemy's shields (shown as a bar to the right of the screen, next to a ringed circle). Once the shields are down (when the bar reaches zero, the icon will lose its ring, showing that the enemy has no more shields), open up with your lasers. To fire your missiles, first select them with TRIANGLE, then arm with CIRCLE. The current enemy will be highlighted in red on the HUD while the missile locks on. Press CIRCLE again to fire.

■ Controls

- ↑ Dive
- ↓ Eject
- ← Turn left
- Turn right
- R Forward thrust
- L Reverse thrust

- R Roll right
- L Roll left
- △ Select missile/torpedo
- Arm/fire missile/torpedo
- Select beam weapon
- × Fire beam weapon
- Change view

■ **Additional features:** Turn to page 96 for a full review of Colony Wars.



The status bars in the corners of the screen let you know the status of your ship and your target.



On the CD

Broken Sword 2: The Smoking Mirror

PUBLISHER: SCE
STYLE: Graphic adventure
PROGRAM: Playable demo

evolution Software made quite an entrance into the PlayStation market with *Broken Sword*, which sold 300,000 copies despite being released at the same time as *FL* and *Tekken 2*. Now the team is finishing the sequel and has been kind enough to offer a fully playable demo.

BS2 is based on the predictions of the Mayan calendar, which states that the current cycle of the world will end in 2012. When a Mayan expert, Professor Obier, discovers some of the Mayans' secrets, the evil Baron Karzad comes up with a plan to use them to his own advantage. It's up to our heroes, George and Nico, to put a stop to his schemes and save the Professor.

This demo is taken from the second section of *Broken Sword 2* and is set in a dockyard. We could tell you more, but that would spoil the fun, so just explore and see what you can find...

CONTROLS:

- ↑ Move cursor up
- ↓ Move cursor down
- ← Move cursor left
- Move cursor right
- R [] Shoulder buttons
- L [] speed up/
- R [] slow down
- L [] cursor movement
- [A] Inventory
- [C] Inspect
- [X] Use
- [O] Move cursor to speech when talking to another character

When on the inventory screen, you

Excellent cartoon-style graphics are just one of the appeals of *Broken Sword 2: The Smoking Mirror*.



can select objects with **SQUARE** and try to combine them with other objects in the inventory, or use them on other things you find (a key on a locked door, for example).

Additional features
 The full game spans many levels and features a staggering range of puzzles to solve, locations to explore, and characters to meet and speak to as George and Nico travel around the world.

Further information
 To find out more about *Broken Sword 2: The Smoking Mirror*, take a look at the PrePlay in last month's issue.

Ace Combat 2

PUBLISHER: SCE
STYLE: Combat flight sim
PROGRAM: Playable demo

One of the very first games to appear on Sony's console, Namco's *Air Combat* was an ambitious, and in many ways groundbreaking attempt to demonstrate the true power of the machine.

Now those top designers at Namco have returned to the air-to-air combat genre with a sequel, *Ace Combat 2*. Featuring super smooth 3D graphics, super slick presentation, and a whole lot of planes and missions, the game is looking very good indeed.

This playable demo lets you fly a complete mission in an F-14 Tomcat. Your objective is to sink the destroyer lying at anchor in the harbour to the north east of your starting position (it's the red dot on the map view). To complete the mission you have to blast the ship before your fuel runs out or you get shot down. Along the way, though, feel free to take on the enemy fighters and ground-based gun emplacements. In the full game this earns you bonuses.

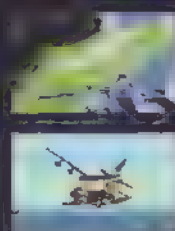
Additional features
 The full version of *Ace Combat 2* features a huge variety of different missions, ordered into a campaign, together with

dozens of different aircraft to fly, and a wide range of enemies, both on the ground and in the air.

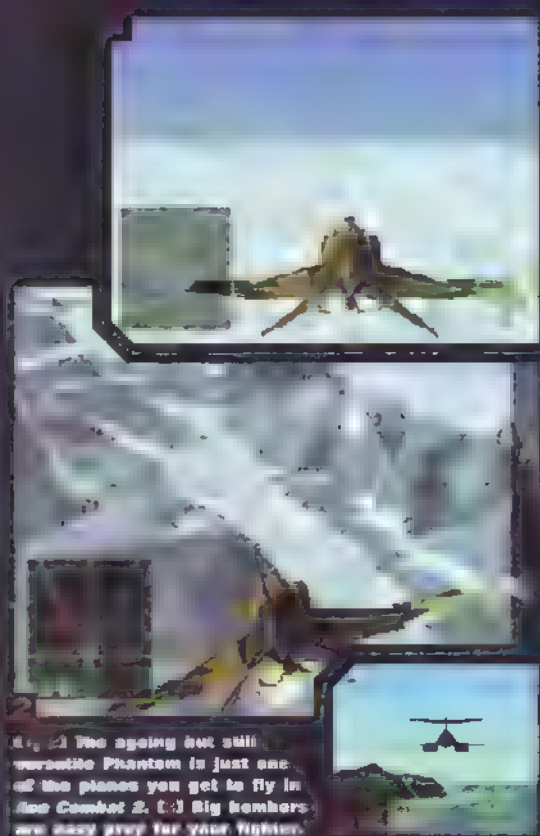
Further information
 See the PrePlay on page 58, and look out for a full review in next month's PSM.

CONTROLS:

- ↑ Nose up (climb)
- ↓ Nose down (dive)
- ← Roll left
- Roll right
- R [] Afterburner
- L [] Airbrake
- R [] Rudder right
- L [] Rudder left
- [A] Cycle current target
- [C] Fire missile
- [X] Map view
- [O] Fire guns
- [] Change view



The external view shows off the game's high-quality visuals.



1. 2 The ageing but still voracious Phantom is just one of the planes you get to fly in *Ace Combat 2*. 3 Big bombers are easy prey for your fighter.

Machine Hunter

PUBLISHER: Eidos
STYLE: Shoot 'em up
PROGRAM: Playable demo

The humble shoot 'em up may not have changed very much since the halcyon days of computer gaming, but in some ways that's one of the reasons it now appeals. There's an awful lot of fun to be had from wading through level after level of evil foes, all just itching to be slaughtered in a variety of satisfying ways. As such, we've got a bit of a soft spot for Eidos' *Machine Hunter*, one of the better PlayStation shooters currently available. Which is why we're pleased to bring you this playable demo, taken from one of the early levels of the game.

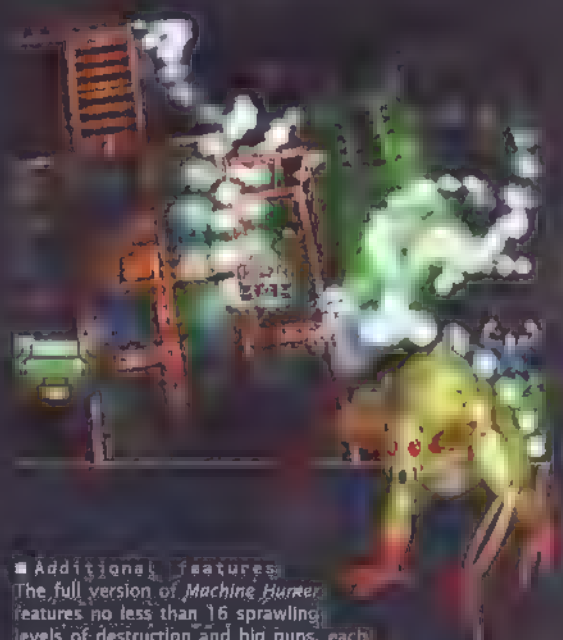
Machine Hunter is set in a 21st century where advances in robotics have freed mankind from the need to perform everyday tasks. When a mysterious alien virus infects a group of mining robots and turns them into implacable killing machines, though, things start looking a little less rosy.

It's your job to destroy the infected robots and stop the spread of the virus

before humanity is destroyed by the very machines it created to serve it. Armed with a variety of jolly large guns, and the ability to hijack robots and control them yourself, it's time for some serious blasting.

Controls

- ↑ Move up
- ↓ Move down
- ← Move left
- Move right
- [R] Select main weapon
- [L] Strafe (with joypad)
- [R] Select secondary weapon
- [L] Fire secondary weapon
- [Up] Fire main weapon up
- [Right] Fire main weapon right
- [Left] Fire main weapon left
- [Down] Fire main weapon right
- [Map] Map



Additional features

The full version of *Machine Hunter* features no less than 16 sprawling levels of destruction and big guns, each with a specific set of objectives that must be completed to succeed.

Further information

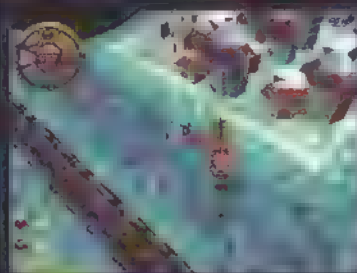
Machine Hunter was reviewed in *PSM22* where it received a solid 7/10 score.

Overboard!

PUBLISHER: Psygnosis
STYLE: Seafaring shoot 'em up
PROGRAM: Playable two-player demo

If you enjoyed the single-player demo on *PSM23's* disc, you're gonna love this new multi-player demo of Psygnosis' nautical blaster, *Overboard!* gives you the chance to take on the role of a cut-throat pirate and sail the seas in search of pillage, plunder, and a good scrap. From a gloriously detailed isometric view you command your trusty galleon, negotiating tricky puzzles, exploring vast maps, stealing as much cash as you can, and blasting anyone (or anything) that gets in your way.

In multi-player mode, as with this demo version, you and your friends can duke it out between yourselves to see who is the real scourge of the ocean.



waves. Gone are the clever puzzles, tricky maps, and vast array of computer-controlled enemies. Instead, it's just you and your foe in a battle to the death.

This demo equips you and your opponent with heavily armed galleons bristling with different weapons, and lets you get down to some serious death and destruction. The key to success lies in mastering both the different weapons available and the control of your ship. You have to outmanoeuvre your opponent, then take advantage of your better position to get in a few good shots. The different weapons fire in different ways, so be sure to experiment. And don't forget to use the UP arrow to help you get out of a nasty situation.

Controls

- ↑ Speed burst
- ↓ + ← / → Tight turn
- ← Turn left
- Turn right
- [R] Accelerate
- [L] Map
- [R] Next weapon
- [L] Previous weapon
- [Up] Fire port cannon/current weapon
- [Down] Fire starboard cannon/current weapon

Additional features

The full version of *Overboard!* features both single and multi-player games. Check out our full review of on page 102 of this very issue.



1.1 As you'd expect from Psygnosis, the cut-scenes are great. 1.2 Serious weapons. 1.3 Look out! Lobster! Gops.

On the CD

Between The Eyes

Don't worry!

These programs are pre-production versions of finished games. If they crash or bug-out, simply reset your PlayStation and reload.

PUBLISHER: SCE
STYLE: Racing game
PROGRAM: Playable demo

We're proud to present the first playable Yaroze demo to appear on a PSM cover disc. A neat little 3D racing game that sees you plunging down a psychedelic tunnel at ridiculous speeds.

Between The Eyes is a great demonstration of the ease with which the Yaroze system can be used to put together simple games and demos that are startlingly effective. Yes, it's very basic, but it's also surprisingly addictive. Give *Between The Eyes* a couple of

minutes and you may well find yourself hooked for a lot longer than you'd expect. At present there are no plans for a full game, but keep your eyes peeled for more news about Yaroze-developed releases.

Controls

- ← Turn left
- Turn right
- ⊗ Accelerate
- Ⓢ Change views

Racing down weird and wonderful tunnels in *STE* is a lot trickier than it seems, and can be a lot more fun than you might think.

Final Fantasy VII

PUBLISHER: SCE
STYLE: RPG
PROGRAM: Rolling demo

Already the biggest-selling PlayStation game of all time, and it hasn't even been released in Europe or the US yet. At last, though, the game that drove Japan crazy is on its way to a games store near you. In the meantime, though, you can take a sneaky peek at the game in this rolling demo. *Final Fantasy VII* casts you as a powerful warrior and throws you into a fantastical world of magic, steam-age technology and adventure. As a member of the elite SOLDIER special forces unit, you once worked for the massive Shinra Corporation which rules the city of Midgar with an iron fist, controlling the enormous Mako reactors that provide the city's power. Restless and unhappy, though, you've now left SOLDIER and gone freelance as a mercenary for hire.

At the start of *Final Fantasy VII*, you find yourself working for a small group of eco-terrorists who have discovered that Shinra's reactors are actually draining the planet of its natural magical energy. You quickly become embroiled in a complex plot as you battle against the forces of Shinra to free the world and its people from subjugation.

Additional features

Simply put, *Final Fantasy VII* is the most incredible game yet to grace the PlayStation, and one of the all-time classics of any genre.

graphics and sound, an incredibly complex and involving story with multiple, interweaving plot-lines, and gameplay that's simple to get into but has more depth than a good-sized ocean, it's a gaming experience that shouldn't be missed. Developer Square claims that it'll take, on average, 120 hours to complete - that's a hell of a lot of game for your money. Don't be put off by the 'RPG' tag, either. *Final Fantasy VII* is one of those rare games that transcends genre boundaries, combining elements from many different styles to create a truly unique experience. As you might have guessed, we like it. A lot.

Further information

You might already have seen the in-depth *PrePlay* of *Final Fantasy VII* that appeared in the last issue of PSM, but even if you haven't, just turn to page 18 for a full review of the game.



The best game ever for the PlayStation? Probably. And if you think this stuff looks good, you'll be amazed at what the full game has to offer - it's simply staggering in size, detail, depth, and atmosphere.

**Crash
Bandicoot 2**



G-Police



V-Rally



**Shadow
Master**



Hercules



Yaroze



Yet another great line-up of games as the bandicoot makes a welcome return and G-Police takes to the skies. There's also a new V-Rally demo, Shadow Master, Hercules, top Yaroze stuff and a couple more surprises. You'd almost think it was Christmas.



Next Month

It's Christmas!

It's the Official UK PlayStation Magazine's Christmas issue next month, and we have the complete guide to your PlayStation Christmas shopping: which games to buy and where to buy them; which peripherals are worth owning and how much they'll set you back; and even the best deals on a PlayStation. Plus loads of lights and tinsel slapped around the place, and plenty of gags involving the words snow, yule and presents.

Road Rage

Just how controversial is Grand Theft Auto? Find out in the Official review.



Plus

Broken Sword 2, Time Crisis, Fighting Force, Actua Soccer 2, Judge Dredd, Jersey Devil, Pandemonium 2, Crash Bandicoot 2, NASCAR, TOCA Touring Car Championship, Monster Mash, Rosco McQueen, and Fantastic Four all reviewed.

With those motion-capture ping-pong balls stuck on to any sportsman that moves, *Actua* sports developer Gremlin Interactive has become a major force in the Britsoft renaissance. Head honcho Ian Stewart is the man behind it all, and talks to *PSM* about the company's lucky 13-year rise to fame...

I A N S T E W A R T

Ian, how good is *Actua Soccer 27* Is it the best football game ever?

I find it difficult to express just how good it is. So let's try a few football analogies... It's the 1962 Real Madrid Team of football games. It's like Puskas and De Stefano (showing my age). It's like Brazil's fourth goal against Italy in 1970. It's a weaving run from George Best and a perfectly weighted cross for the head of Dennis Law. It's like John Barnes' 1982 goal against Brazil. It's like the total football experience that was Cruyff and Ajax. It's like Tommy Smith's header against Borussia Munchengladbach. It's everything you love about the real game because it was created by people with a real passion for it.

How about the rest of the *Actua* range? Which is your personal favourite out of golf, tennis and ice hockey?

Hockey's a great game - and it's certainly taking off in the UK - but you can't beat a round of golf, can you? Incidentally, it's the only game in the office where I have a chance of winning, and of course it's the best golf game on the PlayStation. If I was as good at real golf as I am at this, I might be able to get my handicap down into single figures - a major ambition, believe me.

Is there any sport that can't be motion-captured with those ping-pong balls? What else are you likely to add to the portfolio?

Hang-gliding could prove to be a problem but you never know - anything's possible. You should get hold of one of our

'Actua Soccer 2... It's like Brazil's fourth goal against Italy in 1970... It's like the total football experience that was Cruyff and Ajax... It's everything you love about the real game because it was created by people with a real passion for it'

motion-captured text-adventures.

Judge Dredd and Men in Black are huge licences. Would you have envisaged securing those as games, say, five years ago?

Sounds like a question from *The Economist*! I firmly believe that gamers dictate what will be a good or bad licence. From our point of view, it's all about timing and market conditions and I think we're just about spot-on with both of these. *MIB* has been a massive hit with everyone, but especially with the PlayStation target audience, and *DREDD* is a cult character the world over, celebrating 20 years in print. Yes, we would have looked at both of these games five years ago, but two or three years ago market conditions would have been wrong - the PlayStation was just taking off and still very much in the 'early adopter' phase. Now that we've got a mass market, we're certainly going to see more licences. My only hope is that we don't see licences becoming an excuse for substandard games.

What do you think Gremlin's rise in popularity can be mainly attributed to?

Creativity across the board is the key. Having a fantastic game just isn't enough anymore. We're very lucky at Gremlin in that we have very talented people right the way through the company. From games designers, programmers and artists, right the way through to the PR, marketing and sales departments - everybody at Gremlin plays a major role in the success of a game.

How did the company start? And did you ever think it would be floated on the stock exchange?

I started the company in 1984 with a loan of £1000 and worked with a small group of programmers. We've had some notable successes along the way, from *Monty Mole* and *Potty Pigeon* in the 8-bit days, *Lotus* and *Zool* on the 16-bit platforms right the way through to the successes of *Actua* sports, *Loaded* and the rest. Gremlin has developed into a Plc and now employs almost 300 people. And in answer to your question - no, I never even dreamed

that we would float the company.

Have you always been into videogames, or is it a recent thing?

Ever since *Pong*. It was the first game I played - I'm very old, you know.

And what is your favourite game of all time?

Miner 49er, an old Atari game - I think this is the one that really got me hooked. My favourite Gremlin game is *Realms Of The Haunting*, a PC title we released last year.

Which non-Gremlin game is your current favourite?

Croc, from Fox Interactive, seems to look and play really well.

What five PlayStation games should be in everybody's collection?

Erm, I wouldn't like to say. Although any self-respecting PlayStation fan should own the full collection of *PSM* demo discs...

What do you think of the current state of the PlayStation industry?

Going from strength to strength, and games will get better and better as publishers get even more familiar with the hardware. I think the next 18 months are going to be really exciting as we push PlayStation technology to the limit. It's a great time for game fans.



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